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ine goes after cabinet clash

Oskar Lafontaine's resignation boosts euro

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN AND ALISAIR MURRAY

EUROPE was plunged into confusion last night when Oskar Lafontaine resigned as German Finance Minister after a fierce cabinet row with the Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder.

Herr Lafontaine, decried by *The Sun* as "the most dangerous man in Europe", had made himself into Britain's bogeyman by pushing hard for tax harmonisation and much tighter European integration, and his departure was greeted with barely concealed glee in Downing Street and on the international markets.

Investors concluded that the resignation would put an end to the damaging feud between the German Government and the European Central Bank, and the euro, which had been trading at fresh lows - staged a remarkable turnaround within minutes. European Government bonds also climbed in the post-resignation euphoria and European stock markets, which were closed when the news broke, are expected to see strong gains today.

Herr Lafontaine, a champion of traditional tax-and-spend socialist policies, has been at war with the ECB from the moment he took office, with his demands for lower interest rates and a "red euro" - a currency sensitive to centre-left pressure.

Analysts said that his departure not only restored confidence in the euro but, ironically, also made a European interest rate cut more likely because the ECB would feel less under pressure to prove its independence.

Herr Schröder hurried last night to reassure Germany that his coalition Government was still on a stable footing. But the Social Democrats will hold a crisis meeting today to nominate a successor to Herr Lafontaine as party chairman - with suggestions that Herr Schröder may take on the role - while the inner government circle will also announce a new finance minister.

Hans Eichel, the former prime minister of Hesse, is the front-runner. Herr Eichel, like Herr Lafontaine, is a strong believer in tighter European integration, but he is regarded as more of a conciliator.

Despite the Chancellor's apparent confidence, there was no disguising the fact that Herr Lafontaine's resignation was a crushing vote of no-confidence in the Government at a time when the country holds the EU presidency. Herr Lafontaine was central to the negotiations for an overhaul of European finances in preparation for the enlargement of the community and critical decisions are to be taken at a summit in Berlin in a fortnight.

Now Germany's ability to broker a satisfactory deal has been seriously weakened. Although the resignation removes a thorn from Chancellor Schröder's side, it cripples the government at a vital moment in European politics.

The struggle between Herr Schröder and his finance minister has been at the heart of the Social Democratic-led government since it toppled Helmut Kohl last September. Herr Lafontaine has come under sharp criticism for a muddled tax reform, for sending the wrong signals to industry and for political flirtation with ex-communists. The Social Democratic party has split into two camps, with modernisers loyal to the Chancellor having the slight advantage over more traditional socialists who looked to Herr Lafontaine.

The weakness of his position became clear earlier this week when he was again tipped to become the next president of the European Commission - an unrealistic but politically inspired leak intended to show that he was on the way out.

The showdown came at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday. The Chancellor complained about the sloppy work of some ministers and barked that he was fed up with backtracking after bungled and half-baked initiatives had



Oskar Lafontaine, whose resignation yesterday was greeted with glee across Europe

been launched on the public. He then hinted he might resign if his team did not perform more professionally.

The comments were directed primarily at the controver-

sial Green environment minister, Jürgen Trittin. But it was also a criticism of the finance minister. Herr Lafontaine gave his full support to the Chancellor at the cabinet ses-

sion. Later that evening, however, he decided to throw in the towel.

Bonn in chaos, page 15
Leading article, page 23

Al Fayed's brother wins battle for passport

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE brother of Mohamed Al Fayed yesterday won his six-year battle to get a UK passport, opening the way for the Harrods chairman himself to get his British citizenship.

A final decision on Mr Al Fayed's request for a passport has not been reached but Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, has removed an obstacle blocking a successful application.

The Home Office said it was seeking further information before making the decision on Mr Al Fayed's five-year effort to obtain citizenship.

But in giving his brother, Ali Fayed, his passport, Mr Straw ruled that a government report branding the brothers as liars was no longer relevant to the applications.

A statement issued by the Home Office said Mr Straw had decided not to be influenced by the Department of Trade and Industry report into the takeover of Harrods by the three Fayed brothers. It had ruled that their account of the takeover in 1985 was "unreliable", "untrue" and "bogus".

Ali, Mohamed and Salah Fayed were said to have lied to the City, press, DTI and their advisers about their origins, wealth and business interests. A Home Office statement said that Mr Straw had decided to discount the criticisms of Ali Fayed made in the DTI report because of the passage of time since it was published in 1990.

Home Office sources said that the criticisms would also be discounted when a decision is taken on Mr Al Fayed's application.

Laurence Harris, solicitor for the brothers, said they were delighted by the news and that Mr Al Fayed was confident that he will also now receive a British passport.

Mr Harris, a partner in the London law firm of D.J. Freeman, said that Mr Straw's decision was a huge step forward. "Ali has been waiting six years for his application to be determined fairly and he now has his passport."

Mr Harris refused to say what further information in relation to Mr Al Fayed's application was being sought by the Home Office and said he had no idea when the matter would be resolved.

Egyptian-born Ali Fayed, 55, who came to Britain in the late 1960s, originally applied for UK citizenship in 1993. His brother, Mohamed, 66, applied a year later. The third brother, Salah, has not applied for citizenship.

Lord Archer of Weston-Super-Mare, the former deputy chairman of the Conservative party, Sir Gordon Reece, Margaret Thatcher's image adviser, and Sir Peter Hordern, a former Tory MP, gave references for both men. Field Marshal Lord Bramall, former Chief of the Defence Staff, also supported Mr Al Fayed's application.

The applications were rejected in 1995 and the brothers then embarked on a legal battle to force a review. They won a Court of Appeal ruling in 1996 that the decision was unlawful.

Michael Gove, page 5

Clegg is cleared

Paratrooper Lee Clegg was acquitted of the 1990 murder of a teenage joyrider in Belfast, despite being branded a liar by the judge. Clegg was found guilty of a second charge of attempting to wound the car's driver, Mr Justice Kerr said that much of the soldier's defence was untruthful and incapable of belief. Page 6

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Britain says EU farm deal is too costly

By CHARLES BREMMER IN BRUSSELS AND PHILIP WEBSTER

THE European Union settled the outline of a radical reform to its costly system of farm subsidies yesterday, but Britain and France immediately insisted that the deal cost too much and needed more work.

Farm ministers claimed that they had achieved a breakthrough after three weeks of protracted negotiations in Brussels by devising a price and subsidy shake-up to curb the excesses of the £30 billion annual cost of the common agricultural policy (CAP).

While farmers across the Continent reacted with fury to planned cuts in their subsidised income, Franz Fischer, the EU Farm Commissioner said the spending overhaul, which trims guaranteed prices for beef, cereal and milk, was "the most far-reaching and comprehensive reform ever".

Nick Brown, the Agriculture Minister, who helped to



Here an EU directive, there an EU directive, everywhere an EU directive. Old MacDonald had a farm, etc.

tie up the deal at an all-night session, also called it "the most radical reform in the CAP since its inception". He said:

"When fully implemented it will cut food bills by £1 billion a year, equivalent to £70 a year for a family of four."

Among other things, the reform calls for the first cut in subsidies to dairy farmers and a pledge to end the milk quota system, long opposed by Britain. In 2006, Britain's annual quota is also set to rise a little. The benefits to consumers were challenged by the National Farmers Union, which gave a lukewarm welcome to the reform package. Ben Gill, the NFU leader, said: "I would like to think they would be passed to the consumer but the reality is that the proportion of the final retail price that the farm gate price makes is very, very small these days."

However, the package was

Continued on page 2, col 6
Cash freeze hope, page 13
Leading article, page 23

Premier League crisis as two quit

By ADRIAN LEE

FOOTBALL was thrown into crisis last night after the Premier League's two most powerful officials were forced to resign over secret deals they allegedly made without consulting club chairmen.

Sir John Quinton, the chairman, and Peter Leaver, the chief executive, left after a stormy meeting at which they were told that England's leading clubs had lost confidence in them. Despite insisting they had done nothing wrong, the pair accepted that their positions had become untenable.

Their departures threw the national sport into further turmoil after the sacking of Glenn Hoddle and the recent resignation of Graham Kelly, the Football Association's chief executive.

The latest row involved the appointment of Sam Chisholm and David Chance, two former BSkyB executives, as consultants on television deals. It is believed they were

offered annual contracts of £600,000 each, plus bonuses.

A Premier League source who attended yesterday afternoon's quarterly management meeting in London said: "This had been rumbling on for a while and matters came to a head. Feelings among the chairmen were strong."

It is likely that Sir John and Mr Leaver will receive sizeable pay-offs. The futures of Mr Chisholm and Mr Chance were also in doubt.

Dave Richards, the chairman of Sheffield Wednesday, was appointed acting chairman and Mike Roston, Premier League secretary, as temporary chief executive. A working party was set up to see if the contracts with BSkyB, an associate company of News International which owns *The Times*, and the BBC could be renegotiated.

Wembley sold, page 8
Matt Dickinson, page 52

Sheep grazed before the dinosaurs came

FROM SAM KILEY IN JOHANNESBURG

FOSSIL hunters yesterday revealed the skull of what they said could be mammals' earliest ancestor: a creature which lived 250 million years ago beside an inland sea in what is now South Africa.

Anomocephalus africanus was probably about the size of a sheep, although almost certainly considerably less intelligent. It is believed to be the first of the Anomodonts, which predated the dinosaurs

by millions of years. So called because of their teeth, these were the most common of the mammal-like reptiles known as therapsids, which evolved during the Permian period and vanished in the Jurassic era 190 million years later.

These were thought to have originated in Russia, but the discovery of *Anomocephalus africanus* means that scientists are having to rethink South Africa's role in evolution. Professor Bruce Rubidge, director of the Bernard Price Institute for Palaeontological



The reconstructed fossil skull, and an artist's impression of the creature

Research at the University of the Witwatersrand, said: "Our new find has allowed us to re-evaluate the family relation-



ships of the Anomodonts, and to show that the South African portion of what was the prehistoric super-continent of Gond-

wana was an evolutionary hotspot 250 million years ago."

The scientists have yet to determine whether *Anomocephalus africanus* had warm or cold blood, but Professor Rubidge said: "We have taken a guess at what colour it was, and its skin texture. This is a very significant find because it shows that Africa could have been the home of the distant ancestors of mammals."

Details of the discovery are available on the website http://www.wits.ac.za/media/press_releases/anom.html

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Monkeys are left bemused in the organ grinder's absence

Apologies for absence can invite more questions than they answer. MPs who scammed into the Chamber after morning coffee for Questions to the Minister of Agriculture thought to find the main man. Nick Brown, waiting there for them, hot off the plane from Europe, where, until the small hours, he had been hammering out an EU agricultural settlement. The morning news was full of the deal.

So where was Mr Brown?

The Front Bench was almost empty. Alone on a

waste of empty green leather were a small junior minister, Jeff Rooker, and his plumper junior ministerial pal, Elliot Morley. Big monkey, little monkey. No organ grinder. MPs were told Mr Brown was not yet back.

Why? Talks on the common agricultural policy had been completed in the small hours, leaving plenty of time for a little zizz, then a plane back. Suspensions intensified when Brown's juniors declined opportunities during questions to discuss the deal, insisting that they hoped their boss

would be in today with a Commons statement. One or two Labour backbenchers jumped the gun and praised Brown's magnificent achievement. Morley and Rooker did not seem too anxious to respond. Maybe the Cabinet had not yet decided what line to take. Was this deal a revolution in agricultural policy, another remarkable triumph for Tony Blair's positive approach to Europe? Was it the best available in difficult circumstances, deserving measured, resigned approval? Or was it



shabby compromise that Mr Blair will toss back as inadequate? "It does not matter what we say," Lord Melbourne once shouted at the backs of his departing Cabinet. "But, mind, we must all say the same thing." The subject was the price of corn. What was the message now? Labour backbenchers felt their pockets for that reason.

opposite." The minister (Mr Morley) remarked, rather griggish, that he was not responsible for what went on in his hon friend's frying pan. At least MacShane called it pig meat. David Rendel (Lib Dem, Newbury) referred insistently to pork in his question about British pig farming but there's something refreshingly old-fashioned about Mr Rendel. "Watch out, Charlie!" shouted a Labour wag as Rendel rose; both Charles Kennedy and David Rendel are in the running for the leadership of their party. "No competition there, Charlie!" Labour shouted, as a low-key Rendel shouldered a courteous and factual question. Mr Kennedy smiled. Curiously, it seemed to be he who was acting as chief Liberal Democrat spokesman on agriculture, though that post is held by the notably expert Paul Tyler. Kennedy was making all the running. Tyler was away. Why? I made inquiries. The official line is that Mr Tyler is off discussing bananas. My guess is that, in a dark alley,

the small, wispy MP for North Cornwall has encountered two Kennedy henchmen with a big sack. But it's not all sharp elbows and knives in backs at Westminster. Slow to rise with his question, quiet-spoken David Chaytor (Lab, Bury N) stammered "Forgive me" to Madam Speaker. "Why?" shouted a Tory. "Cos he's a nice boy," came the returning cry from a Labour bench. "And I'm a very forgiving Speaker," cooed Miss Boothroyd.

Hackney council chief quits after schools clash

THE first privatisation of an education authority moved a step closer yesterday with the resignation of the chief executive of Hackney council, in East London, days before the publication of a highly critical inspection report.

Tony Elliston announced his departure after four years in the £100,000-a-year post amid plaudits from local politicians. But he is expected to be criticised for his relations with the borough's education department when Ofsted reports on the authority.

David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, sent a "hit squad" into Hackney in September 1997 after a first Ofsted report found serious weaknesses in its school system. Richard Painter, the businessman appointed to bring about improvements, clashed with Mr Elliston over the restructuring of the authority, which had no chief education officer.

Liz Reid, an experienced official from Edinburgh was brought in to fill the post, but is said to have found her powers limited. The inspectors' report is expected to find that there has been little improvement since the authority's first clash with the Government.

Mr Blunkett announced in January that local authority services would be privatised if they were deemed unsatisfactory.

Education in the borough may be privatised, write

John O'Leary and Hannah Betts

ry. Scores of firms applied for inclusion on a list of approved contractors. Mr Elliston's resignation will be seen as part of a real guard action to head off the possibility of privatisation. But ministers are understood to have already discussed a handover of key services. CBT, a charitable trust which already acts as a consultant to a primary school in the borough which failed an Ofsted inspection, is the favourite to take them over.

Hackney councillors met with representatives of the Local Government Association on Wednesday evening to discuss strategies to keep control of the authority. One proposal involved the creation of an education action zone with the City of London Corporation. An alternative involved the establishment of a Hackney Board for Education Stand-

ards, comprising some current councillors, representatives from neighbouring boroughs, members of the private sector and officials from the Department for Education and Employment. The LGA is known to favour the second option.

The association has asked Mr Blunkett to meet them for talks before any decision is made regarding Hackney's future. But ministers are known to be anxious not to allow uncertainty over the authority's future to drag on.

Yesterday Estelle Morris, the School Standards Minister, promised "decisive action" to secure better services in areas where local education authorities were failing, following an Audit Commission report on education services. Hackney was one of five authorities named by the Commission for their declining performance at GCSE at a time when most areas showed improved results.

Mr Elliston said he believed the foundations for continued improvements in Hackney's services were in place. "I have worked extremely hard over four years and there comes a time when you have to get a balance back into your life, especially when you have a wife and young family to consider."

Education, pages 42, 43



Mark Burnell, who impressed his publisher with his ability to write like a woman

A UNIVERSITY drop-out who spent seven years trying to find a publisher for his novels has finally won a £200,000 deal (Dalya Alberge writes). The *Rhythm Section*, was snapped up just a week after he sent off the manuscript. Susan Watt, publishing director of HarperCollins, which is publishing the thriller in a two-book deal, spoke of his "original author's voice". She was struck by how he convinces the reader with his characterisation that "it is a woman talking". Commenting on his resilience during those seven

Third time lucky for drop-out

years, Burnell, 34, said yesterday: "I took the view that the longer I spent at it, the harder it was to give up." After dropping out of Durham University just a year into his course, he took a series of odd jobs including cleaning and barwork to support himself while he tried to write. Combining the two

proved difficult and when he came into a little money from his family, he was able to devote himself to writing full-time. "I moved out of London, back to Northumberland to make the money go further," he said. But though the money dried up last year, he refused to give up. The *Rhythm Section* is the story of a woman living several different lives at once, he said. "It is about the delinquent between those lives and the complications when one or other of the lives starts to infect the other. It is about living under an alias."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Council tax in shambles rises by up to 10%

competition is a noble require further reform realised. Page 23 Council tax bills in the shires are set to rise by three times the rate of inflation this year, according to the Chartered Institute for Public Finance. The average increase will be 10.5 per cent, compared with 3.5 per cent in metropolitan areas, the energy, confounded lish counties and 8.4 per cent in Wales, the survey by *The Times* last month, which rural areas would be the hardest hit.

The three highest known rises are in the shire, with Band D up 17.9 per cent to £703.88, and Wandsworth, South London, up 15.5 per cent to £573.38. Ministers have said they are the meaning of excessive rises but Richard O'Donoghue, Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment, said the figures showed "a real crisis in local government". He added: "Council taxes on ordinary families are a burden more than £100 a week a year higher than when Labour came to power. Rural areas will be the hardest hit. Labour took money from these areas and gave it to Labour heartlands."

Sarwar admits lie

Mohammed Sarwar, the Labour MP for Glasgow Govan, agreed at the High Court in Edinburgh that he had lied over a £5,000 cheque from his co-accused, Mumtaz Hussain. He originally told his lawyer he was given the cheque during a meeting at Glasgow Airport as a guarantee on a loan to an election rival, Badar Islam. Mr Sarwar said that was a lie to protect his hard-earned reputation — the cheque was handed over in a sweetshop. He denies giving Mr Islam £5,000 to make a false police declaration. The case continues.

Computers for poor

Poor families will be given recycled computers for as little as £5 a month as part of the Government's drive to prepare the workforce for the computer revolution. David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, unveiled a £400 million information technology package detailing the Chancellor's Budget commitments. Teachers will be offered subsidised loans from a £20 million fund to buy laptops for use at home as well as at school, and employees will be given tax relief on computers borrowed from their firms.

Plan for exotic wildlife

A new deal for the giant earwig, blue-faced booby and other exotic wildlife of Britain's dependent territories has been drawn up by the Government. Ministers have agreed that after years of underfunding, the forests, mountains and waters of territories from St Helena to Pitcairn Island deserve better protection and an Environment Charter, leading to tougher laws to protect against the growing pressures of tourism, pirate fishing and development, will be unveiled by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary.

Phone firms targeted

The Trade Secretary was urged yesterday to tackle extortionate rates charged by mobile phone companies as part of the Government's new campaign against "rip-off Britain". Consumer groups said that firms like Cellnet, Vodafone, One2One and Orange should be among the first targets of new powers to crack down on retailers who charge more than their counterparts overseas after it emerged that the largest networks had hiked some off-peak charges by as much as 1,500 per cent.

Adopted girl can stay

A Jamaican girl adopted by her grandparents can remain in Britain, despite Home Office opposition. Five Law Lords unanimously ruled that the needs of the 17-year-old were more important than wider immigration policy considerations. Allowing the grandparents' challenge to a Court of Appeal ruling, Lord Hoffman said: "In cases in which adoption would confer real benefits upon the child it is very unlikely that considerations of maintaining an effective and consistent immigration policy could justify refusal of an order."

School drugs alert

A girl aged ten was semi-conscious in hospital last night and two of her classmates needed medical treatment after swallowing drugs that she had brought to school. The pills, thought to contain a sedative, were brought into the playground at Colliery Primary School, in Dipton, Co Durham, by the girl, who innocently handed out them out "like Smarties" to two nine-year-olds. Police said that they had arrested a 19-year-old man. They are treating the girls as innocent victims.

Dog's Commons motion

Lucy, David Blunkett's guide-dog, made parliamentary history yesterday when it was sick on the floor of the House. The rare example of canine indiscretion came shortly after the Education and Employment Secretary finished a speech on the education provisions in the Budget. His Tory counterpart, David Willetts, rose to reply when the six-year-old black Labrador retriever crossed made its feelings known. The dog was taken outside for some water. Mr Blunkett said later: "Lucy is fine now."

Prescott rules on war of the houses

By TIM JONES

MORE than 500 years after a crucial and bloody Wars of the Roses battle, John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, last night turned down permission for houses to be built on the site.

According to campaigners, including Robert Hardy, the actor, and Sir Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of English Heritage, the first battle of Tewkesbury, in 1471, was among the most important in English history. But the local council had rejected their claims that the 10-acre field in Gloucestershire was steeped in history.

The second war to be waged on the site, against the proposal by Bryant Homes Meridia to build 51 houses, began in May 1997, when Tewkesbury council supported the development plan.

The bitterly contested public inquiry ended when Mr Prescott agreed with the inspector that the proposed development would have an irreversibly damaging impact.

Kelvin van Hasselt, of the Battlefields Trust, said: "This decision is a crucial planning precedent and indicates the importance the Government attaches to the Battlefields Register." Chris Shaw, planning officer for the borough council said: "It is a shame that the democratic process has been overturned because of the pressure of an unelected body."

EU subsidy

Continued from page 1

cast into doubt by France and Britain because the six-year reform will cost over £3 billion more a year than the £30-billion ceiling set by EU leaders last month.

"This does represent progress, but it is not satisfactory as far as we are concerned," said Tony Blair's spokesman.

Jean Glavary, the French farm minister, said: "The work remains unfinished. There is a risk that the accord will founder."

The French and British doubts could cause the whole package to unravel when European leaders try to overhaul the EU budget at a summit in Berlin on March 24. Freezing farm spending at close to current levels was a prime objective for London, Paris and Bonn.

The Germans, who were determined to broker a deal to clear the ground for Berlin, said they had achieved the best possible compromise. The negotiation was complicated by a French refusal to have anything to do with a German-backed scheme which would have required governments to shoulder part of the farm bill from their national budgets.

While Mr Brown's negotiating skills were praised when the Cabinet discussed the deal yesterday morning, Mr Blair and Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, made plain that further reform would be needed. Britain believes that the EU's stated aim of stabilising its overall spending at today's real terms level in the year 2006 is unattainable. British sources accept that the French stance probably makes such a goal unrealistic.

London may get electronic election

By JILL SHERMAN
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LONDON'S five million electors could be the first in the country to use an electronic voting system when they choose their Mayor and Assembly members on May 4 next year.

Nick Raynsford, the junior Environment Minister, said he would look at different methods of using electronic systems to replace the traditional pencil-and-paper method of voting. One obvious benefit would be much earlier declarations of results.

The top option now being considered is

the use of an electronic machine installed in a booth in a polling station. The voter would then merely touch a button to enter their choices. But the elections next May will be highly complex, involving four different votes, and the government is open to other suggestions.

There will be two votes for the London Mayor, a first and second preference. If no candidate gets more than 50 per cent all candidates except the top two are eliminated and second preferences redistributed.

In addition, however, there will also be two votes for members of the new assembly. Each elector can vote for a candidate

in their constituency as well as casting a separate vote for the party of their choice.

Mr Raynsford announced yesterday that he would now invite companies to send in their own ideas for providing electronic equipment.

Ken Livingstone, the MP for Brent who has accused the Labour leadership of trying to block his candidature, was delighted by the news. He said that under the old system it would have taken about two days to count the votes, but an electronic system could announce the result within an hour. "Instead of waiting until 4am for the results in Brent, I can be out celebrating at my victory party," he said.

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سكرا من الذهب

Body exhumed in 29-year mystery of dead children

By STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

DETECTIVES have reopened their inquiries into the deaths of two children after 29 years to see if they were the victims of paedophiles. Police have exhumed the body of an 11-year-old girl in the hope that scientific advances could provide new clues.

The body of Susan Blatchford was found with that of Gary Hanlon, 13, in a shallow grave in Epping Forest in June, 1970. The cause of their deaths, in what became known as the Babes in the Wood case, was never established.

Gary's body was cremated, but police hope that Susan's body could corroborate information they have received about the cause of death. Scientific advances could show the possible use of drugs by an attacker, and evidence of an attack or an assault. Scotland Yard confirmed yesterday that Susan's body had been exhumed from a churchyard in Enfield, North London. Samples were taken by a pathologist and the body was reburied within 24 hours as forensic scientists began tests.

The exhumation was carried out after



Susan Blatchford, left, and Gary Hanlon, and a headline from the inquest in 1970. Now police hope that scientific advances could help to solve the case

police under Detective Chief Inspector Robin Scott worked for months to substantiate the new information. Susan's family agreed to the exhumation, which was authorised by the Home Office. The children disappeared from their homes at Enfield in March 1970. Susan

'Babes in wood' deaths remain a mystery

had asked Gary if he wanted to go for a walk one afternoon. There was speculation that they had run away together. The bodies were found by a man walking his dog about 30 minutes walk from their homes. The bodies had lain too long for scientists in the early 1970s to find very much.

At the inquest, the pathologist, James Cameron, said that Gary's clothes had not been disturbed, but that Susan's stockings, pants, bra and shoes had been removed. He said that the clothing could have been removed by animals and he



Detective Chief Superintendent Leonard "Nipper" Read, who led the investigation, said he had always believed the deaths were murder. Mr Read, who also led investigations into the Kray twins, said: "I was always convinced, but there was so little to determine the cause of death."

The case was reopened briefly in 1984 and then a second time three years ago by officers from a murder squad in North London after they were given new information. The Yard has refused to discuss the source of the new inquiry in the hope that the informant could provide more details.

Scientific advances over the past decade include DNA techniques that can identify suspects from a particle of hair or a flake of skin, and toxicology tests that can identify a wide range of chemicals from minute samples. Traces of opiates and barbiturates can be identified in hair and nails. Teeth may also hold traces of a drug.

Fingerprint work means that more and more surfaces can now yield prints including plastic surfaces such as bags. Uncovering fibres and making matches has also become more accurate.

Kubrick film clip ruled too explicit

By CAROL MIDDLEY, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE first scenes from *Eyes Wide Shut*, the final film made by Stanley Kubrick, were released yesterday and promptly judged too explicit to be shown on television.

Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman are seen naked and having sex in front of a large mirror in the 90-second trailer that the film director, who died on Sunday, made to show cinema owners.

The movie has been almost three years in the making, largely because of Kubrick's exacting standards.

The trailer was released at the ShoWest convention for the film industry in Las Vegas on Wednesday, but the American television networks considered it too risqué and cut it to ten seconds.

One television announcer said: "Large portions of this trailer are unsuitable for televi-

sion audiences. It has not even been rated because there are very explicit sex scenes between Kidman and Cruise."

In Australia, one television network placed a roll of negative film across the couple's naked bodies while others would show only shots of them kissing.

Cruise and Kidman, who are married in real life, play psychologists who are married but cheat on each other with their patients. The screenplay by Frederic Raphael, which explores sexual jealousy and obsession, is based on *Truism* by Arthur Schnitzler.

The trailer, which was not intended for a general audience, is not likely to be seen in its entirety in Britain for some time. Trailers cannot be shown until the British Board of Film Classification has given



Scenes from the trailer for *Eyes Wide Shut* that American television viewers will not be allowed to see in full. It features Nicole Kidman and her husband, Tom Cruise

en the film a certificate. That will not be for several months, since *Eyes Wide Shut* is not expected to be released here until the summer, several weeks after its release in the States.

Julian Senior, marketing vice-president for Warner Bros. said: "This is not intended as an all-audience trailer; it is an excerpt that was chosen by Stanley Kubrick to give cinema owners a sense of the film."

The film was Kubrick's first since *Full Metal Jacket* in 1987. The director, who also made *A Clockwork Orange* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, had been adding the final touches when he died at his home in Hertfordshire.

Nurses warn of danger in using essential oils

Ian Murray on aromatherapy risk to children and pregnant women

ESSENTIAL oils can be dangerous, especially to children and pregnant women, nurses said yesterday.

With aromatherapy now one of the most fashionable of all complementary medicines, delegates attending the Royal College of Nursing's annual congress in Harrogate called for better labelling and more regulation of the use of oils to stop them becoming a health hazard.

Essential oils used in aromatherapy are distilled essences derived from plants. There are about 30 commonly used scents, ranging from basil and bergamot to lavender, rose, sage and tea tree.

Retail sales of such oils increased by 70 per cent between 1992 and 1994, according to the latest available figures, but that rate is known to be accelerating. Sales now top £14 million a year and the number of practitioners registered with the Aromatherapy Organisation Council has soared from 2,500 to 6,000 in seven years.

The council has a code of conduct for members, but it represents only those therapists who are prepared to abide by its rules. At present, anybody can set up as an aromatherapist and there is no control over or licensing of the products they use or sell.

Although reputable makers sell high-quality products, prices can be high. Because there

are no proper regulations, cut-price versions containing a very low proportion of essential oils are increasingly available on market stalls, where they find buyers among fashion-conscious but poorer customers.

Kath Ryan, a nurse and trained aromatherapist from Birmingham, told the congress that even the best essen-

tial oils were dangerous if used in strong concentrations. If too much was used, the oils could cause rashes, skin burning, nausea and vomiting. Pregnant women using them had miscarried and there was evidence that the oils could cause liver disease.

"The labelling of a lot of oils is insufficient and only tells you to put a few drops in a

bath, to avoid skin contact and not to take it internally," she said. "The label usually does not tell you what oils are there and names are given in Latin, which doesn't mean anything to most people."

She said manufacturers of good-quality, pure oils were always willing to send information about their products, but users might still not understand how to use and dilute them to ensure that they would not cause harm.

"People just don't realise how strong these oils can be," she said. "Just by smelling them you can lift molecules out which will start circulating in the bloodstream. These oils are natural products but they are potent."

Miss Ryan is conducting a three-year research trial at Birmingham Women's Hospital using essential oils on patients to reduce high blood pressure before operations. She said that she has been able to give an aromatherapy massage and reduce the blood pressure of patients who were anxious before an operation.

Carole Cunningham, a nurse and aromatherapist from York, said: "We would also like to see the companies who sell these oils having specific knowledge about what they are selling, and there needs to be better regulation about the training and education of aromatherapists."



Essential oils can harm children, nurses have warned

USES AND RISKS

Lavender: steam distilled from flowering tops of plant. For stress, insomnia, and problems. May cause uterine bleeding. Contraindicated in pregnancy.

Peppermint: steam distilled from flowering tops. For headaches, sinusitis, flatulence, indigestion. Should not be used by pregnant women, epileptics or those with high blood pressure. Can cause skin irritation and should be used in high dilutions.

Rosemary: steam distilled from leaves. For memory, circulation, and blood pressure. Can cause skin irritation and should be used in high dilutions.

Sage: steam distilled from leaves. For memory, circulation, and blood pressure. Can cause skin irritation and should be used in high dilutions.

Tea tree: steam distilled from leaves. For skin conditions, such as acne, eczema, and psoriasis. Can cause skin irritation and should be used in high dilutions.

Ylang-ylang: steam distilled from flowers. For stress, insomnia, and problems. May cause uterine bleeding. Contraindicated in pregnancy.

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Exile

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[illegible]

Harmon, 1971, p. 4.

Fans may not get into big fight

By RICHARD L. ...
AND JAMES ...
IN NEW YORK

THOSE SAYING that fans will flock to New York this year, that tickets are the most important item in the closet about in demand.

Some fans expected to be matched with a match with a match but there were that large number would get a could even be a room for the night.

Many of the fans for the first night will be pledged by the either new or been sold on the workers at a higher prospect of the ers having to be on television in the els and for tickets are more than a concern.

Concern for the fans, the fans for the four days of the undisputed weight champion demanded a Mayor of New York, Adolpho Calabrese would be the fans.

Mr. Makonnen met fans who they have been met fans and advice to fans if they do not have a ticket, stay and watch on television.

After the disbanding of the team of football World Cup last year it was there will be no system under which a company that sells a sports event is liable to find any money of the fails to materialize.

هكذا من العمل

Exile who may have found a home at last

HE HAS been the most controversial man to come out of Egypt since Moses. And like that Prince of the Nile, Mohamed Al Fayed has been in exile for most of his life. It was Moses's brother, Aaron, who eventually made it to the Promised Land. And it has been Mohamed Al Fayed's brother, Ali, who has succeeded in the long quest for the promised passport. But this morning Mohamed has good reason to believe that he may go one better than his Pharaonic predecessor and live to secure his heart's desire.

Jack Straw's statement yesterday strongly suggests that Mr Al Fayed is on approval. The decision to grant his brother citizenship, and the related announcement that passage of time has rendered otiose a critical Department of Trade and Industry report, implies that, if Mohamed can keep his nose clean, he can place his hands on that little maroon book.

Mr Al Fayed's desire to acquire a British passport is, like so much of his life, overlaid by myth and complicated by intrigue. He has spoken in the past of his romantic attachment to Britain, having been inspired by the sight of Her Majesty's sailors steaming through the Suez canal. His desire to join the British establishment led him to hope that his own son might walk down the aisle with Her Majesty's daughter-in-law in the pristine white of those sailors.

But that dream died, along with Diana and his beloved son Dodi in a Paris tunnel on that tragic night in August 1997. It was the most grievous of many reverses in a remarkable career. But it has been a career almost more notable for Mr Al Fayed's resilience and recoveries from his wounds, whether self-inflicted or perpetrated by enemies.

He was born into an obscure and genteel poverty he would rather forget, and greatly resents others picking over the son of an Alexandria

Michael Gove traces the Fayed's quest for a passport and suggests Mohamed's wait will not be long

schools inspector, he was ashamed of his father's modest background, remarking of him in later life, "He was useless." His past was certainly of no use to him and his brother when they launched their bid for Harrods. It was as princes of Egypt that they mounted their purchase. And it was for allegedly exaggerating their independent wealth that they were subsequently criticised.

But the Home Secretary is clearly determined to allow the past that Mr Al Fayed has done so much to obscure to be forgotten. The DTI report into the brothers' takeover of the House of Fraser was critical of their attempt to exaggerate the grandeur of their status. The inspectors concluded that they had lived in an Alice in Wonderland world where "lies were the truth and the truth was a lie".

The brothers vigorously contested a conclusion that they believed was motivated by racism and malice. And if they were unlucky in the choice of inspectors, they were lucky in their main assailant. Their rival for House of Fraser had been the German-born tycoon Tiny Rowland, and it was his energetic opposition that had coloured the report.

But Mr Rowland, a former member of the Hitler Youth, was hardly a sympathetic figure. Mr Al Fayed's biographer, Tom Bower, believes that it was distaste for Mr Rowland that helped the Fayed to keep their prize. Sir Gordon Borrie, then the Director-General of the Office of Fair Trading, advised the DTI that "the Monopolies Commission does not exist to punish people for lying. The shareholders got the cash. Morality is irrelevant."

New Labour is the last or-

ganisation to punish people for making mistakes in the Eighties, so it is perhaps no surprise that the Home Office has decided that the passage of time has rendered the report unnecessary in assessing the Fayed's fitness for citizenship. While the Fayed may have been guilty of sharp practice during the Harrods fight, they still delivered by paying the agreed price. The Fayed also delivered during another fight where sharp practice occurred, a fight that saw Labour rather than House of Fraser shareholders reap dividends.

As part of their long campaign for citizenship, the Fayed used their money to buy British MPs. One, Tim Smith, resigned after his financial relationship was revealed. His admission in the run-up to the last general election made the stain of sleaze on the Tories

indelible. Accusations that another former minister, Neil Hamilton, was also in the Fayed's pocket are still contested. But the allegations were enough to make Martin Bell's anti-sleaze crusade against Mr Hamilton a theme of the 1997 campaign, a theme which became the crashing coda to a requiem for the Tories.

Mr Al Fayed took delight in the Tories' fall, an act of revenge against an Establishment he felt had betrayed him. But his attitude towards the Establishment has always been ambivalent.

He sponsored the Royal Windsor Horse Show to show his support for the monarchy, just one of a string of charitable endeavours that saw him walk with the well-connected. His most successful invasion of grand circles came with the romance between his son and Diana, Princess of Wales. Although Mr Al Fayed's claims that the couple were to become engaged can never be authenticated, it was, observers attest, a genuine romantic friendship. The confusion and bitter-



A Harrods shop window yesterday. Mohamed Al Fayed's long wait for British citizenship may soon be over

ness provoked by conflicting accounts of responsibility for their death have left a bitter aftertaste. But the loss of a beloved son and his lover inspired sympathy even from those not enamoured of him.

Mr Al Fayed has not had to work hard to make enemies. He fell out with his first busi-

ness partner, the arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi, whose sister was Mohamed's first wife. An earlier search for a passport took him to Haiti, which he left after complications with a diplomatic document and the undying wrath of the country's ruler, Papa Doc Duvalier. Other business colleagues

blanch at the man's name, but some unexpected figures speak up for him. His role in supporting sterling during a past crisis is referred to favourably by some Tories, and he has recently found a persuasive evangelist in Kevin Keegan, manager of his Fulham football team, whom he

has released to manage England. In having Keegan pay generous tribute to him, Mr Al Fayed has reached parts of the country even Harrods hampers couldn't. If Keegan proves to be England's passport to football glory, then perhaps Mohamed might find his own passport in the post.



Harrods victors: Mohamed Al Fayed and his brother Ali

Fans may not get into big fight

By RICHARD DUCE AND JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THOUSANDS of British boxing fans will arrive in New York this weekend to discover that tickets they bought for the most important heavyweight bout in decades do not exist.

Some 6,000 British fans are expected for Lennox Lewis's match with Evander Holyfield but there were fears last night that barely half that number would get in to see it. Some could even be without an hotel room for the night.

Many of the fans arriving for the fight at Madison Square Garden tomorrow night will find that tickets pledged by agencies in Britain either never existed or have been sold on by American brokers at a higher price. It raises the prospect of Lewis supporters having to watch the fight on television in New York hotels and bars. Black-market tickets are changing hands at more than six times face value.

Concern is such that Frank Maloney, the British promoter for the bout which will decide the undisputed world heavyweight champion, yesterday demanded an audience with the Mayor of New York, Rudolph Giuliani, who said he would be glad to meet him.

Mr Maloney said: "I have met fans who have told me they have been promised tickets and they are not here. My advice to fans is that if they do not have a ticket, stay at home and watch it on television."

After the disastrous allocation of football World Cup tickets last year, it is expected that there will be renewed calls for a system under which a company that sells a ticket to a sporting event is liable to refund any money if the ticket fails to materialise.

First-wave students of surf sought

By HANNAH BETTS

THE world's first university degree course in surfing was unveiled yesterday with an entry requirement of two B grades at A level. Up to 25 students are being sought for the three-year BSc at Plymouth University in September.

The Surf Science and Technology programme will involve practical sessions as soon as conditions off the Devon coast allow, but the Beach Boys will be absent from the syllabus in favour of more academic pursuits.

Dr Malcolm Findlay of Plymouth's Institute of Marine Studies, one of the course's co-founders, is aware that it may sound like a beach bum's charter, but he says there is a need for mortar boards in the multi-million-pound surf industry.

"It is novel and we do expect people's first reaction to be 'Hey, dude! Let's head to the beach and have a good time!' But it simply won't be like that. Surfing is a recreational activity, but it's also a huge global industry that includes an awful lot of science."

"This is the first academically rigorous surf science course in the world - we couldn't even find one in California."

In their first year, undergraduates will focus on oceanography, surfing materials and business studies. In the second year, the course will encompass human biology and human performance. For their finals, students will develop their own specialism within surfing science.

On the strength of current inquiries, the surfing dons are expecting a tidal wave of applications. From these beginnings Plymouth hopes to become a centre of excellence for surfing sciences and even offer surfing PhDs.



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Clegg cleared of murder but branded liar by judge

Sinn Fein says verdict is an insult to family of dead Belfast teenager, reports Martin Fletcher

PARATROOPER Lee Clegg was acquitted yesterday of the 1990 murder of a teenage joyrider in Belfast despite being branded a liar by the judge.

Clegg, 30, wept at a verdict that ended a long legal battle to clear his name, but Mr Justice Kerr did find him guilty on a second charge of attempting to wound the car's driver.

Clegg was released on bail until sentenced but legal experts said that he was unlikely to be re-imprisoned as he had already spent four years in custody.

Last night it emerged that Clegg's barrister had written to the judge and Northern Ireland Secretary during the trial asking that he be released if convicted.

In yesterday's judgment Mr Justice Kerr called much of Clegg's defence "untruthful and incapable of belief" but said he could not be certain that Clegg had fired the fatal shot that killed 18-year-old Karen Reilly. "I think it very likely that he did but I cannot be sure of it," he said. Clegg's



Karen Reilly and the bullet-ridden stolen car in which she was a back-seat passenger.



legal adviser said that neither the soldier nor his family immediately understood the verdict but when it was explained to them in a back room later they were "totally overwhelmed" and "broke down in tears". He will return to England today.

Ms Reilly's father, Sean, left the court distressed but saying nothing. Sinn Fein called the verdict an insult to Ms Reilly's family and said that it "couldn't have come at a worse time when people are working very hard to build and consolidate the peace process".

When Lance Corporal Clegg was released from prison in 1995 there were riots in republican areas but the RUC was not on heightened alert last night.

Clegg cleared his name at his fifth hearing in six years before 13 different judges. The

extraordinary legal saga, that has aroused deep passions on both sides of the Irish Sea, began on the night of September 30, 1990, when his 17-man patrol was manning a checkpoint on the Glen Road in republican West Belfast.

At midnight a stolen Vauxhall Astra sped towards the checkpoint. Clegg, 21 at the time, opened fire. His colleagues followed suit. The driver, Martin Peake, 17, was killed. So was Ms Reilly, his backseat passenger. A post-mortem examination indicated that she had been killed by a bullet from Clegg's rifle.

In the paratrooper's mess a montage appeared showing the Astra with the caption "Built by Robots. Driven by Joyriders. Stopped by Paras".

In 1991 Clegg was arrested and charged with murdering

Ms Reilly and attempting to murder Peake. He was convicted in 1993 and sentenced to life imprisonment.

He appealed unsuccessfully in 1994 but in July 1995 Sir Patrick Mayhew, then Northern Ireland Secretary, freed him on licence after a huge campaign on his behalf in England that collected a million signatures. Riots erupted in Belfast and Londonderry but Clegg returned to his regiment as a physical education instructor and was promoted to lance corporal.

He appealed unsuccessfully to the House of Lords but last year had his conviction quashed and won a retrial after his lawyers presented fresh ballistic evidence. Mr Justice Kerr based yesterday's judgment on 4,000 pages of detailed technical evidence

from the 39-day trial. The gist of Clegg's defence was that he shot the fatal fourth bullet that killed Ms Reilly at the side of the speeding car to defend himself and his colleagues, not at the vehicle's rear in what the prosecution alleged was an unjustified use of force.

In his 189-page judgment, which took five hours to read, Mr Justice Kerr dismissed as lies and fabrications many of the cornerstones of Clegg's defence.

He said that Clegg had indeed fired his last shot at the back of the car. Clegg had actually opened fire when the car was still some distance from any member of the patrol, and described evidence about where he was standing in relation to the other soldiers as a "farrago of deceit and untruths".

He accused Clegg of lying when he claimed that the car had struck one of the soldiers, and said that the soldier had subsequently been struck with a rifle butt by his colleagues to make it look as if he had been hit by the vehicle.

The judge rejected Clegg's "concocted" story that the patrol had just received an intelligence warning of an imminent IRA attack in that area.

However, having given the court the impression that he was going to convict Clegg of murder, Mr Justice Kerr announced that he was not convinced that the paratrooper had fired the fatal shot through the back of the car.



Clegg, who wept when the verdict was explained to him, will return to England today.

He said it was also possible that he and his colleagues genuinely believed that they were in imminent danger.

"I am not prepared to convict in relation to the discharge of that shot," Mr Justice Kerr said. "He must, therefore, be acquitted of the offence."

Joe Hendron, West Belfast's nationalist SDLP MP at the time of the murder, did not directly criticise the judge but said that the two joyriders had been "summarily executed by the elite of the British Army" and the ruling showed there was one set of rules for soldiers and another for civilians.

No paramilitary had ever been found in a joyrider's car. However, Ken Maginnis, the Ulster Unionist Party's security spokesman, expressed "relief that justice has been done". He said it was important to understand the intense pressure faced by young soldiers operating on the front line of a terrorist war and had to make split-second decisions.

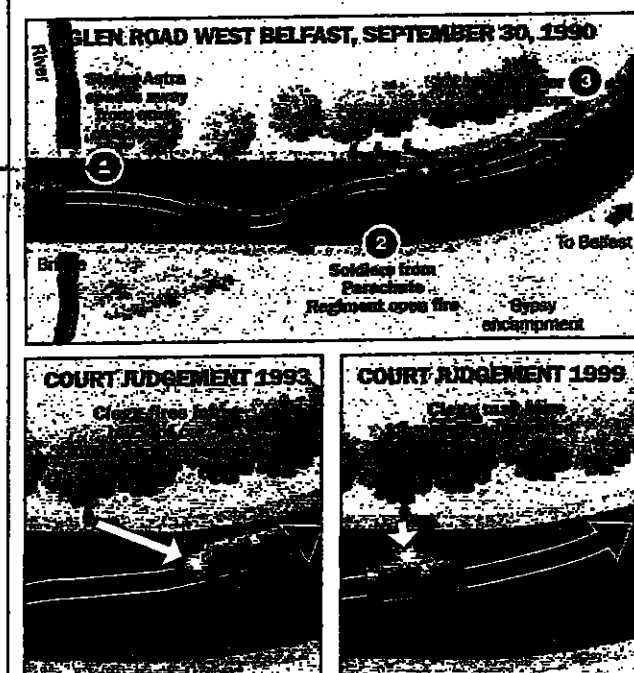
Simon McKay, the paratrooper's legal adviser, said that Ms Reilly's death "will always be on Lee Clegg's conscience".

Future in Army hangs in balance

DOUBT again surrounded Lance Corporal Clegg's future in the Army last night after his conviction on the charge of attempting to wound with intent was upheld. A prison sentence could result in his discharge.

However, since he was immediately reinstated in the Army when released from prison in July 1995, after serving four years for murder, it seems unlikely that he will be discharged if his planned appeal against the wounding conviction fails.

The Army Board would hear representations from the paratrooper himself before making a decision. A spokesman for the Army said that Lance Corporal Clegg would stay in his job as a physical training instructor at the infantry training centre at Catterick, Yorkshire, until his legal case had been resolved.



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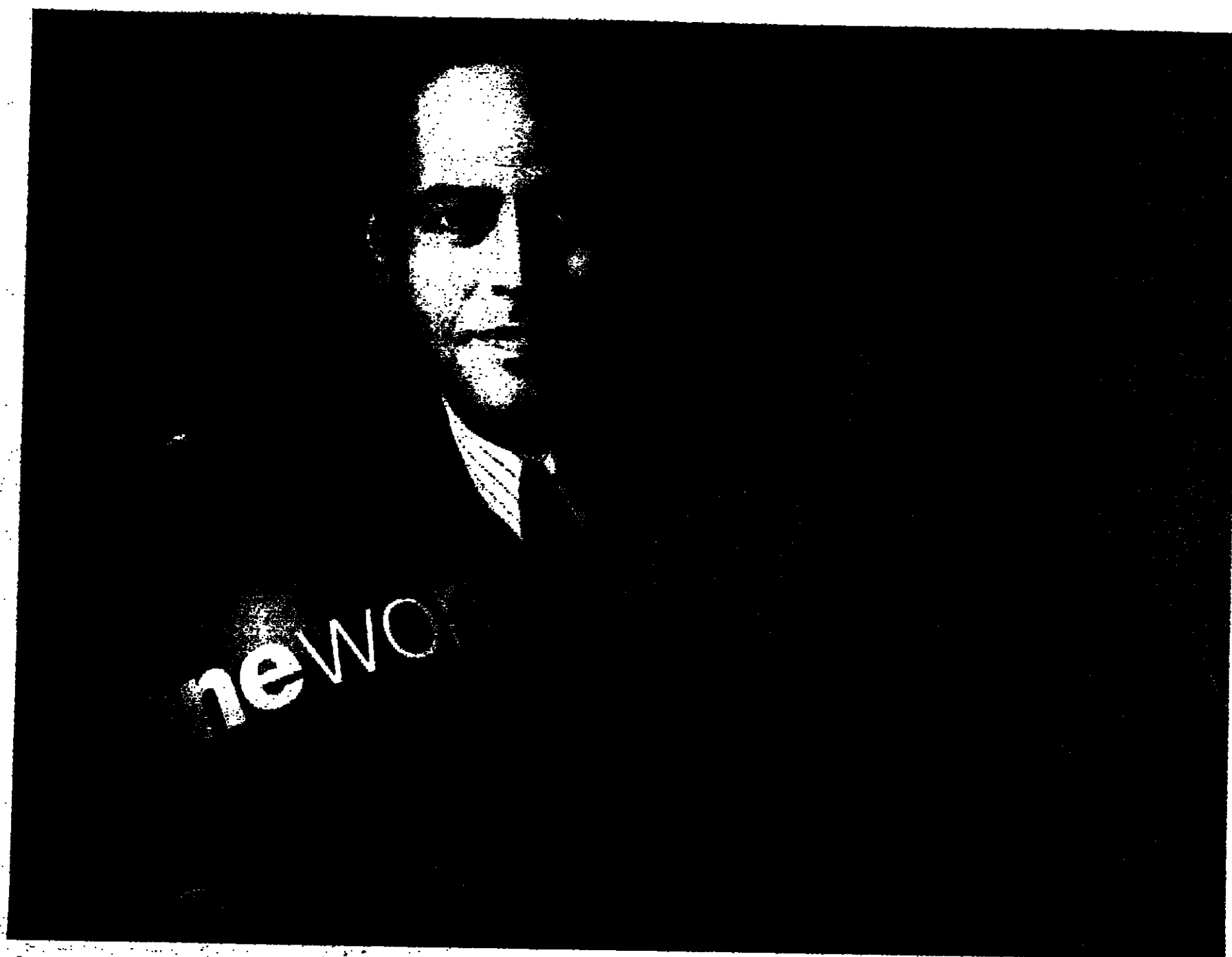
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Prince is caught in election infighting

As royal party arrives in Uruguay, Alan Hamilton reports on the fallout from that Falklands speech

THE Prince of Wales left Argentina after a three-day official visit yesterday with the feeling that he had become a pawn in the country's internal politics as it moves towards a presidential election.

Fallout from his speech on the Falkland Islanders' right to self-determination continued to dog him on his last day in the country before flying across the River Plate to the safe neutrality of Uruguay, where he will spend two days before visiting the Falklands.

His visit to Uruguay will emphasise its developing commercial relationship with Britain. Last night the Prince laid a wreath at the memorial to General Artigas, the Uruguayan national hero, and dined at the President's palace.

Today he will meet business people and tomorrow flies to the naval base at Punta del Este, where Britain has supplied much of the equipment.

The Prince was to have visited a shanty town on the outskirts of Buenos Aires yesterday, but the engagement was cancelled by his Argentinian hosts. Carlos Ruckauf, the Vice-President, who called the Prince's speech "intolerable", said that the visit had been cancelled because the Prince's safety could not be guaranteed.

However, royal itinerary officials said that there was simply not enough time to make the journey to the edges of the vast city.

Señor Ruckauf is expected to stand in the October elections

for the powerful and lucrative post of Governor of Buenos Aires province. Fernando de la Rúa, on the other hand, is the opposition Alliance Party candidate to succeed Carlos Menem as the country's President.

He is head of the Buenos Aires city government, and yesterday was host to the Prince at an exhibition of British architecture in the city. Suddenly, however, he directed the Prince into a side room for an unscheduled five-minute private audience.

"President Menem had his private talk with the Prince on Tuesday; his rival appeared not to want to be outdone," one of the Prince's staff observed.

Guido di Tella, the country's Anglophile but outgoing Foreign Minister, hailed the Prince's visit as a great success. "Of course there are a few people who disagree," he said. "We have extremists, and also politicians who are playing local politics."

Tony Lloyd, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, which sent the Prince to Argentina, said: "Prince Charles made the kind of speech that was parallel to the speech that President Menem made in London last year. We know we have differences on the Falklands. It is legitimate, though, to talk about a peaceful way of containing that process."

The country's Lower House of Congress has voted by a 159 majority that any attempt by Señor Menem to seek a third term as President would be a violation of the Constitution and a usurping of power.

The vote does not have the weight of law but carries a strong political message. Carlos Corbach, Argentina's interior minister, has said that Señor Menem had not made up his mind about running.

Buenos Aires newspapers were still reeling yesterday at the Prince's speech. *La Nación*, under the headline "Only a sentence, but what a sentence!", said that Señor Menem and his Government were taken by surprise by the Falklands remarks, and speculated that the speech was a coded hint of eventual Falklands independence from Britain.

Leading article, page 23



The Prince of Wales meeting spectators after his polo team beat the Hurlingham Club 9-7 in Buenos Aires

Next stop: land of the full monty

By Robin Young

HAVING done his bit for Anglo-Argentine relations, the Prince of Wales next pays a call on Uruguay, one of South America's smallest countries.

The Oriental Republic of Uruguay, sandwiched on the South Atlantic coast between Argentina and Brazil, is about the same size as mainland Britain. The population is only three million, half of which lives in the capital, Montevideo.

The next most famous town is Fray Bentos, which gave corned beef its brand name when a London meat firm began operations there in 1864.

Wool is the principal export and, it has been suggested, the origin of the expression (and film title) "the full Monty". The best sheepskins were said to have come from Uruguay and were shipped from Montevideo, so that fleecpackers graded them as "full Monty".

The country's best-known writer is Juan Carlos Onetti (works include *No Man's Land* and *A Brief Life*), but other famous Uruguayans tend to be sportsmen, such as Gus-

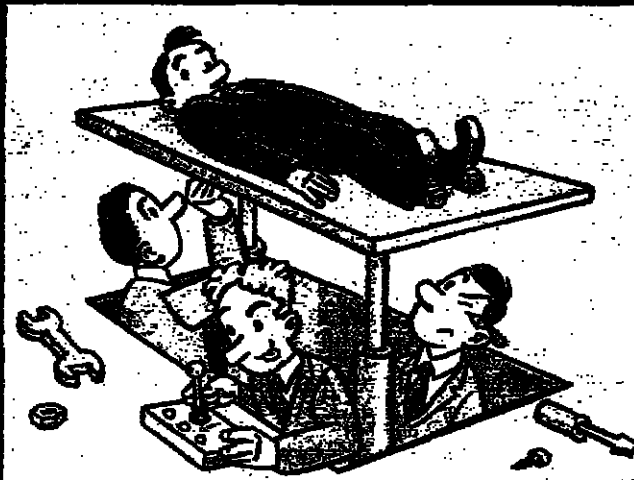
tavo Poyet, the Chelsea midfielder, and Pablo Lemoiné, who plays rugby union for Bristol.

Uruguay won the inaugural World Cup in 1930, beating Argentina 4-2 at home in the final. It failed to qualify for France 98, being beaten in the qualifiers by Argentina.

Since winning its independence from Spain in 1825, Uruguay's politics have been dominated by two parties, the Colorados, "reds", or Liberals, and the Blancos, "whites", or Conservatives. Their rivalry punctuated the 19th century with frequent civil wars.

Thanks to José Batlle y Ordóñez, the Colorado President in 1903-1907 and 1911-1915, Uruguay became the first welfare state in Latin America. Recently the two traditional parties have been in coalition to keep a left-wing alliance out of power.

Among the idiosyncracies of Uruguayan law, it is notable that a husband who finds his wife in bed with another man can claim the right to cut off her nose and castrate her lover.



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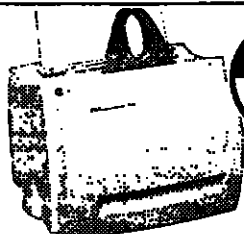
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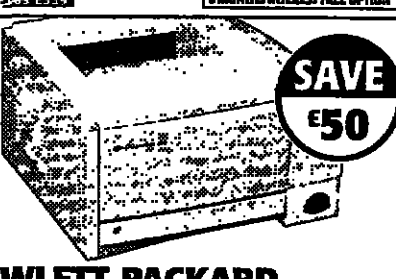


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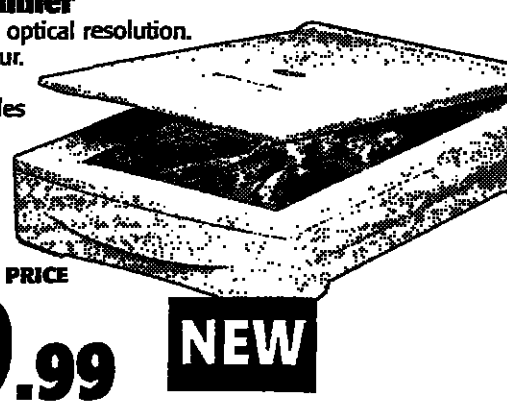


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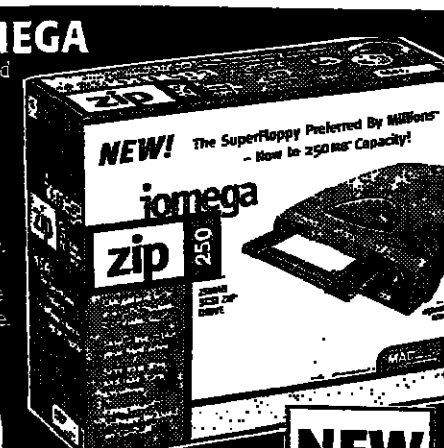


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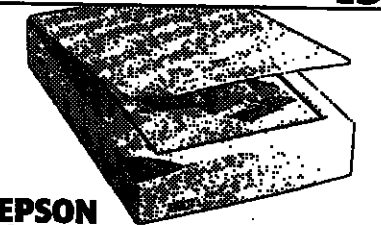


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BACK IN SELECT

Women urged not to desert cancer testing

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

ROUTINE breast cancer screening in Britain is now as good as the high standards reached in the clinical trials that led to it being introduced ten years ago, according to Julietta Patrick, national co-ordinator for the NHS breast-screening programme.

Staff involved in clinical trials are usually better trained and more highly dedicated than those doing routine work, so their results tend to be better. Ms Patrick admitted yesterday that screening was not 100 per cent accurate, but she believed the programme was saving more than 1,000 lives a year.

She said that, despite this, some women were cancelling appointments for a screening after a Swedish study of more

than 600,000 women who had been screened showed no significant reduction in death from the disease. The study, published this month, also said that 4,000 women were having operations and breasts removed unnecessarily after screening led to incorrect diagnoses of cancer.

"If women cancel, that is up to them," Ms Patrick said. "Only three out of five women [in Britain] come for a screening. But we have carried out ten million of them, far more than the Swedish study. It will take eight to ten years before we can definitely say we are saving lives, but we believe it is saving 1,000 lives a year or more."

Sweden pioneered breast cancer screening, but Goran Sjonell, one of the team in-

cluded in the new research, said that screenings had probably been introduced there only because clinical trials gave a wrong impression of how useful a programme would be. "We think that the findings illustrate the difference between trial conditions and real clinical practice," he said.

The Swedish study, which appeared in the journal *Lancet*, has been strongly criticised by Mans Rosen, deputy director general of the National Board of Health and Welfare in Stockholm. Writing to the *British Medical Journal*, he said that the research would not have passed the tests for peer-reviewed publication in the *BMJ* or "other distinguished journals". The researchers had not considered, for instance, that breast-cancer incidence trends varied among the 18 Swedish county councils studied, thereby influencing mortality trends.

The national board in Sweden had no plans to change its advice on breast cancer screening "based on such a defective study", he said.

Michael Baum, Professor of Surgery at University College London, said that the Swedish report widened the debate over how the NHS should allocate its resources.

CALL FOR A SINGLE CANCER CENTRE

The public and private sectors should settle their differences, pool resources and establish a single UK Cancer Centre in London for research and training, according to Karol Sikora, the British oncologist who is in charge of the World Health Organisation's cancer programme (see Murray writes).

Professor Sikora says in the *British Medical Journal* today that the need for a leading institution has never been greater, because cancer therapy is likely to change soon with new treatment strategies. "What is needed to bring this concept to fruition is political will and capital investment by the public and private sectors," he says. "This would defuse the interpersonal bickering that characterises hospital and university mergers."

40% of GPs attacked by patients

THE increase in violent attacks by patients on doctors and other staff is prompting the creation of a "fortress NHS" (see Murray writes).

A survey published today in *BMA News* shows that four out of ten GPs and a quarter of all hospital doctors have been assaulted by the patients they were trying to treat. The trend has persuaded four out of five family doctors to introduce security measures.

"I feel wary when at work," said Jennifer Langdon, a Berkshire GP. "All staff are trained in security matters and we have panic buttons in every room and closed-circuit television." A Somerset GP said: "We are more like Fort Knox than a medical centre."

John Chisholm, chairman of the BMA's GPs committee, said it was very worrying. "Doctors and their staff are increasingly in the line of fire for violence, the threat of violence and verbal abuse."

Nurses admit to racism in NHS

By IAN MURRAY

THE Royal College of Nursing admitted yesterday that institutionalised racism existed among nurses and was blocking the careers of ethnic minorities in the National Health Service.

In an emotive debate, during which some black nurses ran crying from the hall, Christine Hancock, the general secretary, told the RCN's annual congress in Harrogate that, as the sixth largest union in the country, members reflected the strengths and weaknesses of society.

"I have to tell you I do not believe the RCN is any freer of institutionalised racism than any other large organisation," she said. "It is difficult for those of us who are white to really know and understand these issues. Whiteness black people so we don't notice them isn't the answer. It's valuing their blackness."

"We can only give the best

care to patients if we value all our colleagues. We must listen when they tell us about their experience of racism."

Margaret Moore, a nurse tutor from London, said she was reluctant to recruit students from ethnic minorities because she did not want them to be treated as she had been. "I am visible as a black woman and a nurse," she said. "I am here to stay and I want my contribution of over 30 years to health care to be recognised."

A motion was carried overwhelmingly calling on the RCN to address issues related to institutionalised racism.

Christine Watson, the RCN president, said earlier this week that racism was widespread in the NHS. "You're more likely to find black nurses working night duty, less likely to find black nurses promoted into specialist areas."

Schools racism, page 22



Cristina Ortiz's autumn collection for Lanvin, in Paris, featured bootleg trousers, new-style boob tubes, and simple yet beautiful evening dresses

FROM DEBORAH BRETT IN PARIS

Refined Ortiz finds a look of her own

CRISTINA ORTIZ, the former design director of Prada, seems to be finally settling into her role at Lanvin.

After three seasons the Spanish designer, 33, has managed to break away and create a look more her own. This is still sleek, with emphasis on detail, but spurning Prada's gimmicks.

Ortiz sticks with the refined approach suited to the Lanvin customer, and hopes to attract some new ones. Nevertheless, disco fever — which

has come to Paris this season — hit the catwalk at yesterday's show, with glitter-speckled eyes, flowing tresses and hip-skimming molten leather trousers gliding down a mirrored catwalk. The look was long, lean and polished, with

flattering bootleg trousers making a comeback, and versions of the boob tube that were tight around the top and bloused out around the waist.

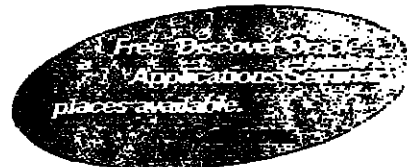
For evening, there were long skirts and shift dresses in white, menthol

and sherbet lime, which, from afar, may have seemed like sacks, but close-up looked more interesting. Forget regular darts: Ortiz constructed convex or concave seams to create shapes that transformed the line of the dress. The simplest of dresses were made exceptionally beautiful and glittering, with vermilion or turquoise sequins.

Luxury went into overdrive: clothes were made from cashgora (cashmere and angora), cashmere stretch, double face cashmere and cashmere and angora polar fleeces.

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IRA steps up exile punishments

'Peace process' has an ironic ring
for those banished from Northern
Ireland, writes Martin Fletcher

FOUR masked IRA men, including one who was armed, went to Mary O'Reilly's terraced home on Londonderry's grim Creggan estate one night last week. They barged inside as she opened the door. "Where's Gerry?" they demanded. Mrs O'Reilly said her 23-year-old son no longer lived there, but three of the men began searching the house while the one with the gun pushed her into the living room.

"What's this all about?" asked Mrs O'Reilly. "You know, missus," the man replied. When she persisted he told her to ask at the local Sinn Féin office in the morning. The search proved fruitless. The armed man looked at the clock. It was 8.15pm. "Tell Gerry he has till 8.15 on Thursday — 48 hours — to get out of Derry for a year," he said.

Gerry had already gone. He, his pregnant girlfriend and their three-year-old daughter had fled two weeks earlier after the IRA visited his home on a neighbouring estate. He had escaped by climbing on to the roof. In 1995 he had spent

four days in hospital after a gang beat him with sledgehammers and nail-studded clubs, then left him 10p to call an ambulance.

He is now living with his family in emergency accommodation provided by Northern Ireland's Housing Executive just outside the city. He has bolts on the doors and sleeps with two baseball bats by his bed. "He's a nervous wreck," said his mother.

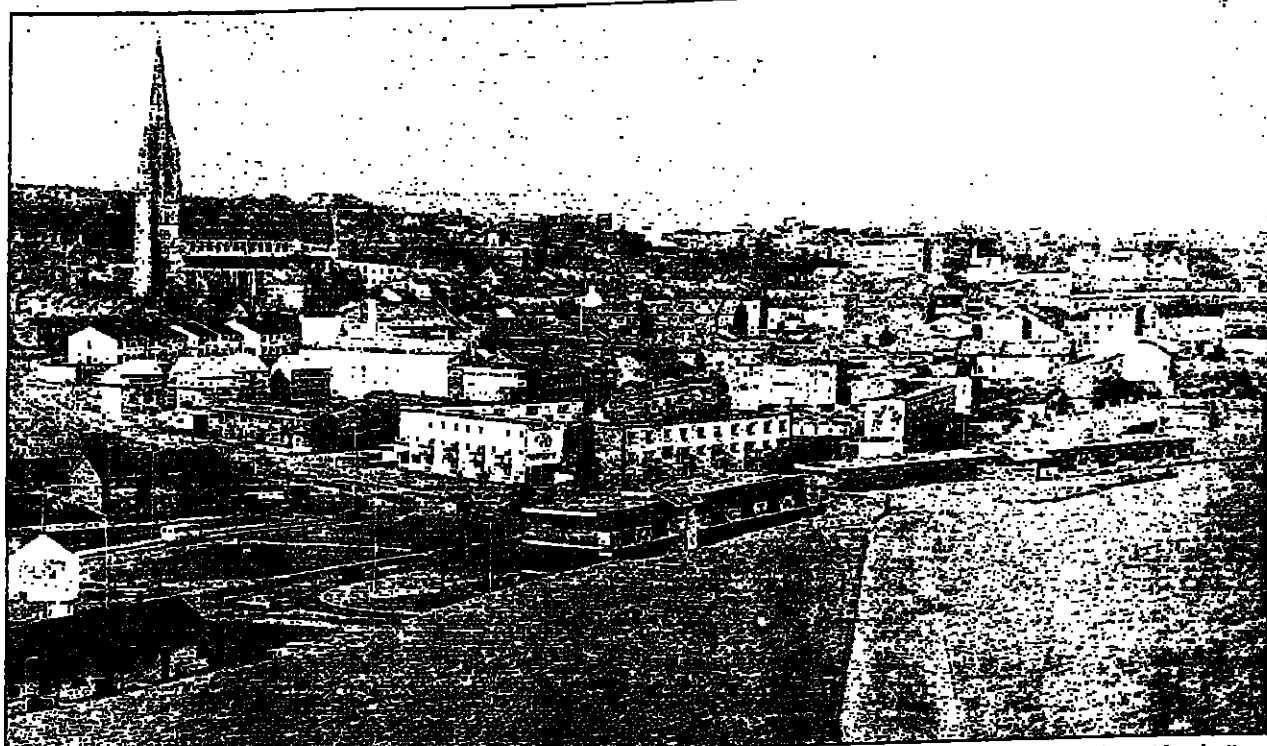
Mary O'Reilly is not her real name. She dares not identify herself for fear of reprisals. Nor is her son's case in any way exceptional. In fact, he got off lightly. Loyalist and republican paramilitaries have exiled hundreds of people during the Troubles — petty criminals, the politically troublesome, those who threaten their rackets. Most were exiled from the Province, not just their communities. The practice is tolerated as a fact of life on Northern Ireland's paramilitary-controlled estates and those exiled are usually given 24 or 72 hours to get out.

Voluntary organisations pro-

vide them with tickets to England or Scotland and temporary accommodation. Because most left quickly and silently, their cases attracted little attention, said Vincent McKenna of the Belfast human rights group Families Against Intimi-

dation and Terror (Fait). Unlike punishment beatings and kneecappings, "it's an easy way for terrorists to get rid of someone without any outcry".

Far from diminishing, the practice had "dramatically increased" during the ceasefire.



Londonderry's West Bank, from where families and individuals have had to flee after falling foul of paramilitary "justice"

said a spokesman for one of the volunteer groups. Entire families were now being banished. The paramilitaries had to show that they were still in control. With each exile they were sending out the message: "We have not gone away."

Reliable figures are scarce, but that organisation is helping about two families and two individuals each month. Fait claims that 440 men, women and children were exiled last year, and 148 so far this. An RUC spokesman confirmed that "the disgraceful practice of excluding people from their homeland is continuing at a worrying rate".

Mrs O'Reilly and her husband admit that their son is a petty criminal who has served four years for burglaries and car theft.

"He's not even a good thief — he gets caught," she said. But "if he did something wrong, there's a big court-

house and three jails to deal with him". The IRA's summary justice was a travesty.

Both were early supporters of "the Ra". They participated in the original civil rights marches — including the Bloody Sunday protest in 1972 — because they were disgusted at how the police and Army treated Roman Catholics. But now "it's gone full circle and the IRA are doing everything that the Brits and police were doing, only worse. They have turned into the Mafia," said Mr O'Reilly.

The IRA ruled the estate through fear, the family said. "We haven't had a ceasefire. The only difference is we're not being stopped and having our cars searched by the police and Army, but we're still waiting for the IRA to come to our door. They've called a ceasefire with the Army and the police, but not their own community."

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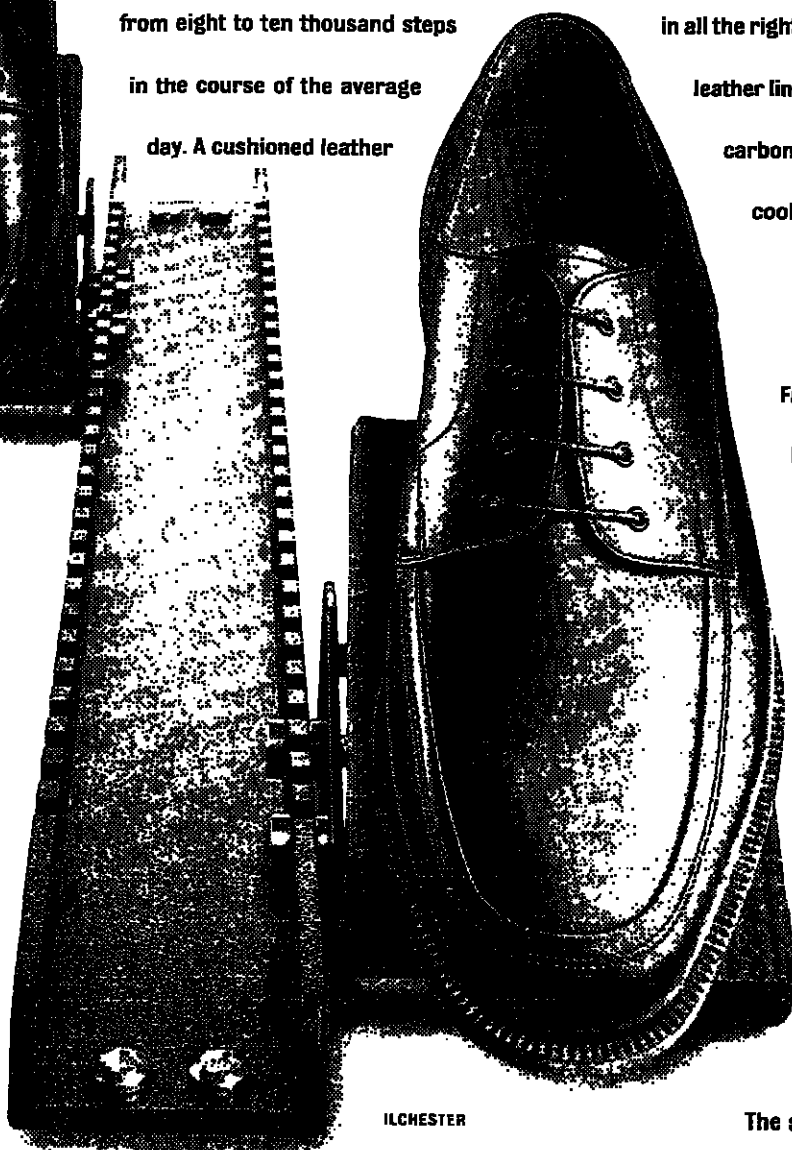
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School has 50,000 reasons to cheer

AN INFANTS school in Warwickshire has become the first to collect more than 50,000 tokens in the Free Books For Schools Scheme (writes Hannah Betts). This is enough for at least 500 books.

Stockingford Infant School in Nuneaton has enlisted the community in collecting the tokens from *The Times*, other News International newspapers and Walkers snacks. Every lunchtime teams of teachers, parents, grandparents and dinner ladies busy themselves cutting out tokens, which continue to pour in at a rate of 1,000 per day.

Nine local businesses, including newsagents, a petrol station, pubs and post offices, have rallied behind them. Pam Gresty, the head teacher,

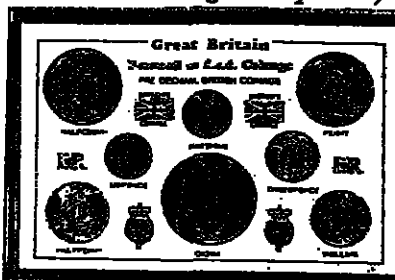


said: "We are lucky to be part of a supportive community." What strategy are you using to galvanise collection? Call 0171-895-9018 and tell us about it (office hours only).

Token, page 26

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مكتبة النور

Deal raises hope of EU cash freeze

DESPITE some grumbling, the agreement on a new farm package brought cheer to European capitals yesterday. It shifts the biggest obstacle in the struggle to overhaul the way that the European Union raises and spends money.

"Things are starting to move now — we will find a solution," said Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the French Finance Minister, who is one of the key figures in the effort to wrap up a budget package on March 25 under Germany's EU presidency. The Germans say that they are now more optimistic that, at a summit in Berlin, Chancellor Schröder will manage to broker a deal on Agenda 2000, the most ambitious spending reform attempted by the EU.

Resolving the technical side of a farm package was a vital first step because the common agriculture policy swallows almost half the EU's annual budget of £60 billion. However, strains between a newly assertive Germany and its French partner could halt an early settlement. The wrangle over farm reform produced the sharpest friction for years between the two core states.

To achieve the overall reform target, however, the 15 leaders must agree unanimously on a solution to a mind-boggling equation. The aim, backed by most states, is to freeze overall spending for the next six years, a feat not previously attempted in the EU's history of ever-rising budgets.

At the same time, funds have to be set aside to prepare for the entry of new member states from the east and hard-

Ministers agree on first step to reform, but big battles lie ahead, reports Charles Bremner

line demands from member states must be accommodated. The main ones are Britain's insistence on retaining its special budget rebate, Germany's demand for a cut in its £8 billion annual contribution, and a refusal from Spain, Ireland and other poorer states to give up their lion's share of regional aid and special subsidies that account for a third of the EU budget.

Old hands from the business of EU financial horse-trading predict that the 15 will muddle through with a tangle of compromises that give just enough to each side to justify a claim to victory. The haggling could fail to produce a solution in Berlin and be carried on to a summit in Cologne in June.

Under fire from its EU partners for shaky management of the presidency so far, Germany is trying to narrow the options for a final compromise. This is likely to include limited sacrifices for the southern states, plus a more modest shift in the German contribution by Herr Schröder. Britain's rebate, worth about £2 billion a year, is almost certain to survive, but with a provision that will not entitle it to money

back on its share of the costs of enlarging the EU to Poland, Hungary and other eastern states. Britain's isolation over its rebate was underlined yesterday when the European Parliament voted to end the money-back arrangement negotiated by Mrs Thatcher in 1984.

It is still possible that the farm package could unravel, bringing down the whole spending edifice, over a fight on how to control the overall cost. Germany, Britain and other states wanted a new system to hand part of the farm money back to member states. This would partly answer German demands for a cut in its share of the budget. Paris wants to limit farm spending and the EU budget by phasing out direct subsidies to farmers.

Both items are likely to go back on the table in Berlin. In the meantime, foreign and finance ministers are embarking on a round of negotiations to pave the way to Berlin.



Farmers' optimism grows

has already seen profits drop by about 80 per cent in the past five years.

"It's a lot better than we might have expected," he said. "The reports coming out of Brussels a couple of weeks ago were very discouraging. We must wait for the fine

print to emerge over the next couple of weeks, but, on the face of it, the settlement is not too bad."

Subsidies for his 250 beef cattle and 200 acres of winter wheat and barley at Eland Hall Farm will be cut by 20 per cent under the new agree-

ment announced yesterday. "We have got to accept that this is the way the future is going and adjust to deal with it," said Mr Meek.

"The beef price has dropped alarmingly over recent years because of the BSE crisis and we shall have to see

how much the new figures take this into account. I was also worried about what the cut in the cereal intervention price might be, but it is not as steep as we first thought it was going to be.

"I will now have to sit down and look at alternatives. Organics is one way forward, but that is still a limited market and it requires a lot of investment to get it started."

Topsy-turvy world where spending saves money

The days of lavish subsidies are numbered, reports Charles Bremner

YESTERDAY'S breakthrough in Europe's attempt to get to grips with its runaway farm budget offered a glimpse of the topsy-turvy world of the common agriculture policy: in order to cut the cost of subsidising farmers, European taxpayers will have to spend billions more than at present.

Like everything involving the CAP, the odd arithmetic has a logic of its own, once you factor in the imperatives behind the 37-year-old system that pays farmers to produce

food at higher-than-market prices and stops importers undercutting them. Put simply, the farmers have to be paid some £5 billion more in the next six years to wean them off a system that would otherwise drive the European Union into bankruptcy.

The cuts of up to 20 per cent agreed yesterday in the EU's fixed prices for cereals, milk and beef are not spectacular,

but they mark acceptance by all governments that the days of lavish subsidies are numbered.

The new deal is not a philosophical watershed, because governments started cutting the fixed-price system in 1992 and substituting direct compensation, along with the notorious system of set-aside land. That so-called McSharry reform sparked riots in France, the towering beneficiary of the CAP, and an explosion in EU paperwork for farmers.

However, the new accord will give producers a hefty shove towards market economics by bringing prices closer to world levels. To the anguish of many smaller farmers already facing severe hardship, cereal

producers will receive cheques for about only half their losses. Beef farmers will get about 80 per cent and milk farmers will have 60 per cent compensation for the time being.

The immediate spur for the latest reform was not the need, argued by Britain and the Nordic states, to slam the brakes on a cash machine that shovels half the entire EU budget into a sector that employs 5 per cent of workers. As the recipient of £700 million of annual subsidies and a cultural belief in the sanctity of the farmer, France was ready to extend the life of the machine that was devised in a 1950s pact with Germany. This gave the Germans an export market for manufactured goods in return for a

guaranteed income for France's huge and then inefficient farm sector.

The main spur for reform this time was twofold. The EU must comply soon with international trading rules that bar subsidies to farmers and exporters and it must also whip itself into shape before the entry, probably within ten years of Poland and four other states from the former Communist bloc. Applying the CAP to Poland, an inefficient agricultural giant where half the workforce is employed in agriculture, and its neighbours, would empty EU coffers.

The European Commission and farm ministers are putting great store by the way the new reform recognises a

broader role for government support. Farmers, for example, will be rewarded for environmentally friendly methods.

The reforms are also supposed to curb the scope for fraud. With so much money on offer, farmers have shown great ingenuity, claiming imaginary crops. The drive to combat the fraud has prompted EU inspectors to resort to satellite photography and other high-tech methods to measure true areas under plantation. Farmers are likely to be tempted by shady practices as long as the subsidy system exists, according to Commission officials.

In the meantime, continental EU governments are bracing for another bout of demonstrations by angry farmers.

Leading article, page 23

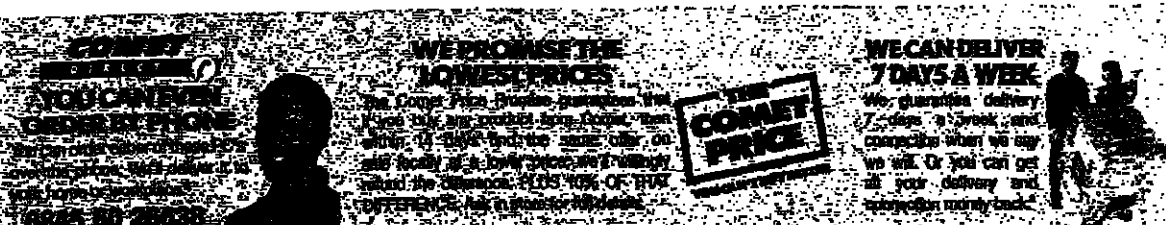
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Anti-euro vote 'no guarantee of victory'

ANTI-SINGLE currency campaigners were warned yesterday that winning a referendum to keep the pound early in the next Parliament would only be the start of their struggle (Roland Watson writes).

Rodney Leach, chairman of Business for Sterling, said: "We would be asked to vote again until we come up with the right answer. It's a battle that would have to be won again and again." Mr Leach was speaking at a head-to-head debate in Westminster with Sir Clive Thompson, the pro-euro CBI president, in the first of many such clashes between opposing sides.

Sir Clive said that business would desert Britain if it remained outside the single currency. He claimed that two thirds of businessmen wanted to see Britain sign up to the euro within the next five years.

Anthony Howard, page 22

Hereditary peers incited to revolt against expulsion

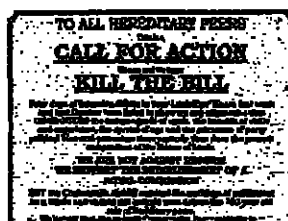
By JAMES LANDALE
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

HEREDITARY peers have received an extraordinary call to rise up in rebellion against the Bill which would expel them from the House of Lords.

Old-fashioned poster bills have been sent anonymously to all 600-plus hereditary members urging them to block the legislation when it comes before the Lords at Easter. The call to arms has been attacked by Tory and crossbench chiefs and dismissed as the work of a maverick crossbench peer trying to incite revolt.

But the poster provided a clear signal to the Government that some hereditary peers are prepared to go down fighting. And it was an uncomfortable warning to Tory chiefs that some hereditaries are beyond the control of party whips.

The House of Lords Bill, designed to scrap the voting and sitting rights of hereditary peers, will receive its third reading in the Commons next



week and its second reading in the Lords on March 29.

The A3-sized poster says the rights of hereditary peers should not be "lightly surrendered". It also insists that peers should not be bound by the so-called Salisbury Convention under which the Lords agrees not to throw out legislation contained in an incoming Government's manifesto.

It ends: "You must attend the second reading debate and kill the Bill," before adding: "The game's afoot."

If the Bill were to be rejected at second reading — something the Lords never does — it would die immediately. The Government would almost certainly reintroduce it under the Parliament Acts and force it

onto the statute book. It is possible that an amendment is tabled at second reading but would almost certainly be defeated.

Lord Strathclyde, the Tory leader in the Lords, said: "This has nothing to do with the Tory party. But it shows the depth of concern felt by some people towards this Government's assault on the constitution and Parliament."

Lord Weatherill, former Commons Speaker and convenor of the crossbenches, said he had investigated rumours that a crossbench peer had been responsible. But all the peers he had spoken to had denied sending the poster.

One peer said: "I think someone was rifling through their drawer and came across some propaganda from the 1911 campaign against reform. He probably just touched it up and gave it a second outing."

A Labour spokesman in the Lords said: "This is another example of a section of hereditary peers who are totally out of touch with the real world."



Buddy politics: Tony Blair and Gordon Brown taking to the airwaves for a phone-in on Talk Radio yesterday

Now for something completely different

TONY BLAIR and Gordon Brown launched a new form of "buddy politics" with a joint appearance to defend the Budget on a radio programme. The Prime Minister and his Chancellor had been invited onto Talk Radio to discuss income tax relief and fuel

By MARK INGLEFIELD, POLITICAL REPORTER

levies, but they could not resist projecting themselves as a pair of back-slapping, regular guys. Dropping his prudent facade, Mr Brown talked about his boss's love of rock and roll. "You can come back

and hear the music playing in Downing Street in the afternoon... and that's before the kids get home," he quipped.

This was the first time that any Chancellor or Prime Minister had appeared on a radio programme together, and was seen as part of Mr Blair's drive to stop the media trivialising politics. It certainly left listeners in no doubt that Mr Brown and Mr Blair were bosom pals. When asked about their friendship, the Prime Minister said it was "the best relationship I know in British politics" — something that might come as a surprise to Westminster's married couples, among them Peter and Virginia Bottomley.

Mr Blair went on to deny

there was a rift between them. "This is a relationship forged in very difficult times, and in Government it will hold."

But this badinage was rudely interrupted by the callers, who were almost entirely critical of the Budget. Dave from Birmingham claimed that it had left him feeling as if "Dick Turpin had just ridden through his living room".

When another caller complained about fuel duties, the Chancellor told him: "Why don't you write to me and I'll get this sorted out."

Only at the end did Mr Brown's chumminess waver. Emulating *The Two Ronnies*, Mr Blair signed off with "It's goodbye from me". Mr Brown hesitated. "Er, and I suppose I should say it's goodbye from him."

THE OLD ONES ARE THE BEST

On "living above the shop" Mr Blair conceded: "It is a strange situation to be in, in a way, but once the door of the flat closes you are with your own family..." Mr Brown interrupted: "Then David Blunkett (Education Secretary) comes round with his compulsory school lessons and Jack Straw comes round with the curfew..." The Prime Minister and

Chancellor have used both jokes before. In an April 1997 election broadcast Mr Blair promised his children they would have "lots of homework" when David Blunkett gets hold of you. On May 11, 1997, Mr Brown told friends he intended sending the Home Secretary to "come around and impose a curfew" on the Blair children if they made too much noise.

Benn's new Bill finds friends left and right

Tony Benn is one of the most infuriating as well as one of the most original politicians of the post-war era. He has been wrong on many central issues of the past generation and, 20 years ago, largely created the myth that Labour members had been betrayed by their leaders which came within a whisker of tearing the party apart.

But he has also been the single greatest influence on constitutional reform up to the election of the Blair Government.

Mr Benn is responsible not merely for allowing peers to disclaim their titles but also for the now regular use of referendums. He has also been persistent and clear-sighted in warning about the growth of executive power and defending the rights of the Commons, not least by making speeches as opposed to soundbites. It has often been easy for ministers and media to dismiss his initiatives merely because they come from him as just one of "Tony's eccentricities".

Yet, this month, he has produced a Bill which has gained the support not just of the Labour Left but also of four Tory MPs. This includes not only Richard Shepherd, the Tories' constitutional conscience, but also David Davis, whom no one has ever called a Bennite, and two other select committee chairmen.

The proposal is the grandly titled Crown Prerogatives (Parliamentary Control) Bill, but in practice, it is mainly about the executive prerogatives exercised by the Prime Minister and other ministers rather than the limited remaining personal prerogatives of the Crown. These executive prerogatives, still misleadingly exercised in the name of the Crown, include declarations of war and the commitment of British troops; signing or ratifying treaties; recognising foreign governments; assenting to European legislation; appointing bishops, judges, peers, ministers,

ambassadors and chairs of public bodies, establishing Royal Commissions; the issue of many orders in council; and executive powers not conferred by statute. These powers can, at present, be exercised without the approval of Parliament. But Mr Benn proposes that they should require the assent of the Commons.

This is not just a theoretical matter. Several MPs of all parties have recently complained that the Government has not sought recent approval by the Commons for military action over Iraq. Moreover, 18 months ago, the Treasury committee pressed, unsuccessfully, for members of the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England to be confirmed by the Commons. Mr Benn presented the measure as an attempt to redress the balance between the executive and the legislature. As he concedes, the Bill is unpopular with those who exercise patronage since they would have to be more accountable for their decisions.

The Bill also proposes that the appointment of Prime Ministers (technically inviting someone to form an administration) and the dissolution of Parliament before the expiry of the five-year maximum should require the assent of the Commons. This affects the personal prerogatives of the Crown, but that is no reason why they should not be debated and considered, though possibly separately from the strictly executive prerogatives.

Mr Benn's Bill stands no chance of becoming law. But he and his supporters have raised an issue which goes to the heart of complaints of high-handedness by Government. It is now up to MPs themselves to take forward the debate. Perhaps the Public Administration Select Committee should hold an inquiry, to complement its current examination of the accountability of public bodies.

Peter Riddell
ON POLITICS

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Computer Active January 1999

Schindler of the art world back in the picture

THE memoirs of Varian Fry, a long-forgotten American wartime hero who rescued some of the greatest cultural figures of the 20th century from the clutches of the Gestapo, were finally published in France yesterday, more than 30 years after he died alone and in obscurity, largely ignored by those he risked his life to save.

Susan Bell
writes in Paris of
new fame for an
American who
saved 4,000

Even before arriving in France, Fry had had firsthand experience of the horrors of Nazism. As a foreign correspondent for an American journal, *The Living Age*, he had witnessed the first Nazi pogrom against the Jews on a trip to Berlin in 1935.

On his return to the United States he became involved with the American Emergency Rescue Committee and jumped at the chance to return to Europe. Armed with a letter of introduction from Eleanor Roosevelt, a list of 200 endangered intellectuals and \$3,000 strapped to his leg, Fry headed for Marseilles, the last big French port not under German control, and set up his headquarters in a third-floor room of the Hotel Splendide.

The Marseilles Fry describes in his memoir, *The Black List*, was crammed with refugees who feared that they would be turned over to the Nazis under the "surrender on demand" clause in the Franco-German armistice. Soon the hotel was crowded with desperate refugees who saw the American as their last hope of obtaining exit papers.

Fry quickly became skilled at arranging emergency visas, false passports and forged identity cards and smuggled thousands of people out by boat or across the Spanish border on foot. He lobbied the US Administration, sympathetic consuls and friends in high places, denounced the internment camps and laundered dollars for his cause.

Among his most devoted associates was Mary Jayne Gold, a beautiful Chicago-born heiress who came to Paris in the Thirties "to have a good time". When the Nazis marched down the Champs Elysees in 1940, Gold moved to Marseilles, where she met Fry. She provided much needed financial help and was not averse to using her looks to persuade officials to turn a blind eye to the rescue work.

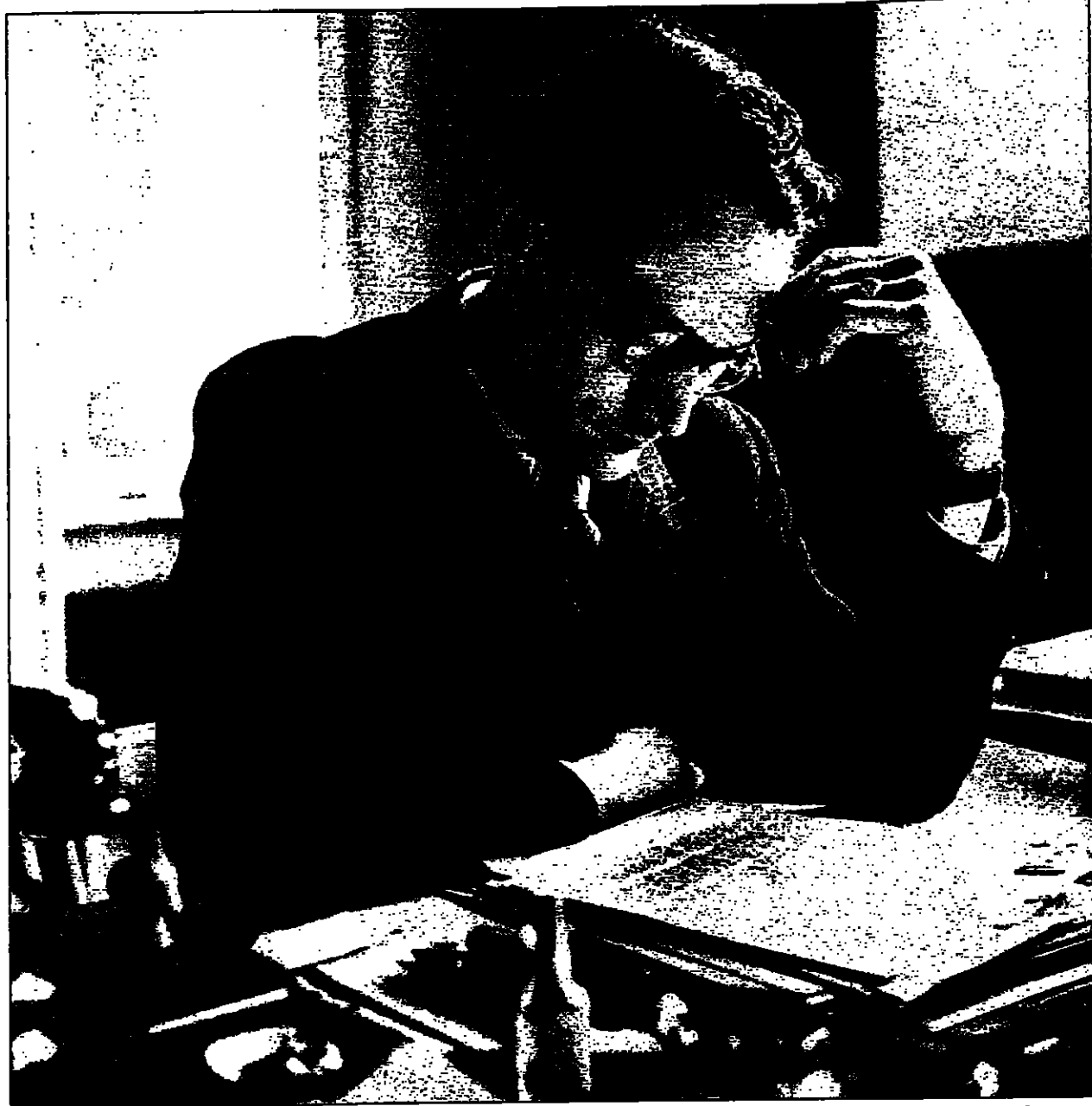
Fry was sent to France on a three-week assignment to help 200 refugees to escape, but he held on for 13 months. He might have saved many more than 4,000 if the US State Department, anxious to maintain good relations with Vichy, had not betrayed him, plotting with the French authorities to

have him expelled for "protecting Jews and anti-Nazis". Saddened and embittered, Fry returned to America, where he taught Latin until his death in 1967. He remained obsessed by the Holocaust: "I would like to forget that look (of a woman refugee)," he wrote. "Even if only for five minutes, I deserve that small respite. But I cannot."

His memoirs were published in America in 1945, but quickly went out of print and his courage was forgotten, although France did honour him shortly before he died with the Legion d'honneur. However, with the republication of his moving memoir, this situation looks set to change. Last year Fry became the first American to be made one of the Righteous Among the Nations by the Israeli Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum. And in Marseilles an exhibition dedicated to him opens next week.



Marc Chagall and Hannah Arendt: Fry helped both of them to escape from conquered France



Varian Fry in his office in spring, 1941. He died in 1967, almost wholly forgotten, even by those he rescued

Agnelli 'rescues' House of Savoy antiques

FROM RICHARD OWEN
IN ROME

GIANNI AGNELLI, the 78-year-old patriarch of Fiat whose power and influence have earned him the title "the uncrowned king of Italy", yesterday emerged as a mystery buyer who bid at Sotheby's in London this week for 18th-century antiques which once belonged to Italy's royal family, the House of Savoy.

In an unusual move Sotheby's agreed on Wednesday to a request from the Italian police to freeze the sale of 24 lots for 35 days to allow investigators to establish whether the export licences were in order.

Italian MPs and police yesterday continued to claim that the royal furniture was of "national importance", and that the export licences - which they do not deny are valid - had been obtained by presenting the items in five different provincial fine arts offices of the Ministry of Culture.

"If the items had been viewed in their entirety, Italian officials would have assessed them as a collection and blocked their export," said General Roberto Onofri, head of the carabinieri section dealing with fine arts offences.

La Stampa, the Turin newspaper, said that a number of wealthy Italians had flown to London to attend the sale, which raised more than £8 million, in response to a call by Signor Agnelli for a "patriotic rescue operation".

It emerged that before the sale Signor Agnelli bought four wall-mounted gilded candelabra decorated with Medici porcelain - which once belonged to King Umberto II, the last Italian monarch - with the aim of donating them to Turin. The city is the seat of the former royal family and the headquarters of Fiat and the Agnelli empire.

The collection was put together by Giuseppe Rossi, who was close to ex-King Umberto, who went into exile in Portugal in 1946. After Signor Rossi's death it passed to his sister, now 80, who plans to fund various charities, including one for young jobless.

Checkmate for German chess king as 'Fritz' leaves cheat exposed

FROM ROGER BOYES
IN BONN

THE German chess world is in uproar over a 55-year-old minor league club player whose stunning victories against Russian grandmasters were allegedly the result of an electronic fraud rather than mastery of the game.

Clemens Allwermann is a retired hi-fi salesman who until recently was content to play at his local club

house in southern Germany. Suddenly, at a chess tournament in Böblingen, he won mate in eight moves against the Russian grandmaster Sergei Kalinichev, one of the world's top players, and stormed on to win first prize.

Again and again, the crucial game was replayed by German chess enthusiasts to analyse Herr Allwermann's lucid play. Then somebody noticed the similarity between the moves, and those proposed by the computer chess programme "Fritz 5.32". The game, so to speak, was up.

Herr Allwermann, it appears, used a messenger hidden on his lap. The grandmaster would make his move and Herr Allwermann, reaching down apparently to adjust his trousers, would punch it into the device. At the other end of the transmitter was an accomplice in a room in the hotel where the tournament was being staged. The friend typed

the moves into Fritz 5.32 and waited for the computer's advice. The counter-moves were then relayed into a miniature ear receiver concealed by Herr Allwermann's long hair.

After his surprising victories he has been so closely watched by spectators that he has lost every game. Electronics shops have confirmed that they sold the apparatus to Herr Allwermann and the German chess and sports authorities are calling for blood. Egon Ditt, president of

the German Chess Federation, wants Herr Allwermann to be banned for several years. "This is not just a prank. We have to send a signal to the world that chess tournaments are not going to be distorted in the same way that chemical doping has distorted athletics. This is electronic doping and has to be punished accordingly."

At top levels there have been frequent allegations of cheating. In the heyday of Viktor Korchnoi, Boris

Spassky and Bobby Fischer - whose international clashes became part of the great Cold War game - allegations flowed about the use of hypnotists, telepathy and even coded yoghurt pots. But it was only a matter of time before cheating at chess became high-tech.

The big question now is how future fraud can be prevented. Some suggest body searches along the lines of airport security before entering the tournament room.

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سكان النهر

hments

Zimbabwe jails white doctor over child deaths

FROM JAN RAATH IN HARARE

AN ANAESTHETIST, who has been pilloried by black radicals here as a latter-day version of Josef Mengele, the Auschwitz SS doctor, experimenting on black patients, had his conviction for causing the deaths of two children by negligence confirmed by the Supreme Court yesterday.

Dr Richard McGown, 62, is due to begin serving a six-month jail sentence in Harare central prison tomorrow for the death of a 20-month-old boy in 1988. He also has to pay a £160 fine for the 1990 death of a 10-year-old Kenyan girl.

Mark Stonier, his lawyer, yesterday told prison authorities that he was concerned for Dr McGown's safety in prison. When he was jailed briefly in 1995, he was kept apart from other prisoners.

Dr McGown was "surprisingly together" after the court ruling, Mr Stonier said.

Born in India of Scottish parents, Dr McGown was regarded by colleagues as a skilled anaesthetist and a pioneer in the technique of injecting morphine into the spine, seen as a major advance in reducing post-operative pain.



Dr McGown: accused of experiments on blacks

Kalpesh Nagindas, the boy toddler, had been given a heavy dosage of morphine for a routine circumcision. Dr McGown handed him over to his parents 28 minutes after the operation instead of keeping him in hospital for a period of observation.

Lavender Kaminwa died of respiratory depression that followed a high morphine dosage for an appendectomy. Dr McGown "saw fit to send Lavender to a general ward where only one nurse was on duty, managing ten patients in five different rooms".

The Supreme Court decision closes what is probably the most extraordinary legal proceedings in the country's history, underlining the deep divisions between blacks and whites in Zimbabwe.

A parliamentary report in 1993 stirred up a frenzy of race hatred when it denounced Dr McGown for alleged racist experiments on black women and suggested that he injected black patients with the Aids virus.

The report was discredited, but it did not stop public demonstrations by black militants who threatened to "amputate whites" if Dr McGown was not given a severe prison sentence.

The controversy continued to the end. Two weeks ago the Supreme Court admitted that a draft of the judgment had been stolen from the desk of the appeal judge, Ahmed Ebrahim, and given to journalists on the state-controlled television service.

Last Friday the band of the prison services led a march by black radicals calling for Dr McGown to be hanged and for the sacking of the Chief Justice, Anthony Gubbay. Justice Ministry officials said later the band had been "duped" into leading the demonstration.



President Khatami of Iran is welcomed at the Vatican yesterday by the Pope at the end of his historic three-day visit to Italy. The trip has symbolised his country's attempt to break out of its "pariah" status 20 years after the Islamic revolution which

Italy hails Iran reformer

brought down the Shah (Richard Owen writes). The President also had talks with Massimo D'Alema, the Italian Prime Minister, who praised "the new openness

with which Iran is looking at Europe". The visit — to be followed next month by talks in Paris — was dogged by demonstrations by Iranian dissidents and a controversy over

the simultaneous presence on Italian soil of Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*. Mr Rushdie said that, if Iran wanted to "normalise its relations with the world", the best way would be to put a stop to death threats.

British outrage as more 'spies' are expelled by Congo

By SAM KILEY, AFRICA CORRESPONDENT

FOUR more British soldiers and Foreign Office officials as well as a US State Department employee were yesterday expelled from the Democratic Republic of Congo after being accused of spying and illegally entering an army base carrying "sophisticated photographic equipment".

The move yesterday, a day after a British diplomat was expelled on the same charges, immediately sparked outrage at the Foreign Office, which repeated its denial that the men were involved in spying.

"These people were not spies. Their purpose there was wholly innocent. We would have been guilty of irresponsibility if these plans for a possible evacuation in the event the Congo's war spread to the capital were not put forward," Tony Lloyd, the minister responsible for Africa, said.

The expulsions came as Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and his French counterpart, Hubert Vedrine, started a joint tour of Africa in Ghana. There have been deep suspicions of the motivations of

both countries in backing different sides in the Great Lakes catastrophe which has led to the collapse of the former Zaire into civil war.

The arrests and expulsions of alleged British spies will play into the hands of both French and British officials who suspect one another of plotting in Africa.

But yesterday the two senior foreign officials vowed to bury the rivalries of the past when they went on to visit Ivory Coast.

"Britain and France have not always been the closest of partners in Africa," Mr Cook told a meeting by a lagoon in the former French colony's main city, Abidjan. "We need to be transparent with our friends in Africa."

M Vedrine, like Mr Cook, highlighted the history. "That this event takes place in Africa is symbolic," he said, adding that concepts of carving up the world and of zones of special influence had lingered longer in Africa than elsewhere.

"All that is now well and truly finished," he said.

Economic woes drive families to suicide in Japan

Multiple suicides, in which children are forced to die with their parents, are rising sharply as Japan's economic crisis grows worse, a study showed yesterday.

Last year 72 children were the victims of family suicides, according to the Child Abuse Prevention Network, a private group based in Aichi, central Japan. This marked a sharp increase over the 46 such deaths in 1997, and 38 the previous year.

Thirty mothers and 20 fathers were involved in last year's spate of *ikku shinju* — family suicides where parents decide it is more humane to take their children with them in death rather than leave them with a stigma of failure.

But if the motive is "honourable", the reality is often grisly. Last September, three children and their mother were burnt to death when the father set fire to the family home. The man, who was rescued against his will, told police he planned to die with his family so they could escape together from his mounting debts.

In another case last October, a woman who could not repay a finance company's consumer loan died with her two children when she drove her car over a 230ft cliff.

The incidents have become so commonplace that, if reported by the press at all, they command only a few lines on the inside pages. Researchers found that "the increase in family suicides appears to reflect the severe economic situation and the debt trap people find themselves in as a result".

A prolonged slump has driven thousands of companies to the wall and pushed unemployment to a postwar record high. Though Japan has the world's second largest economy, it lacks the social safety net common in Western countries. "People around 50 have

More children killed by parents, writes Robert

Whyman in Tokyo

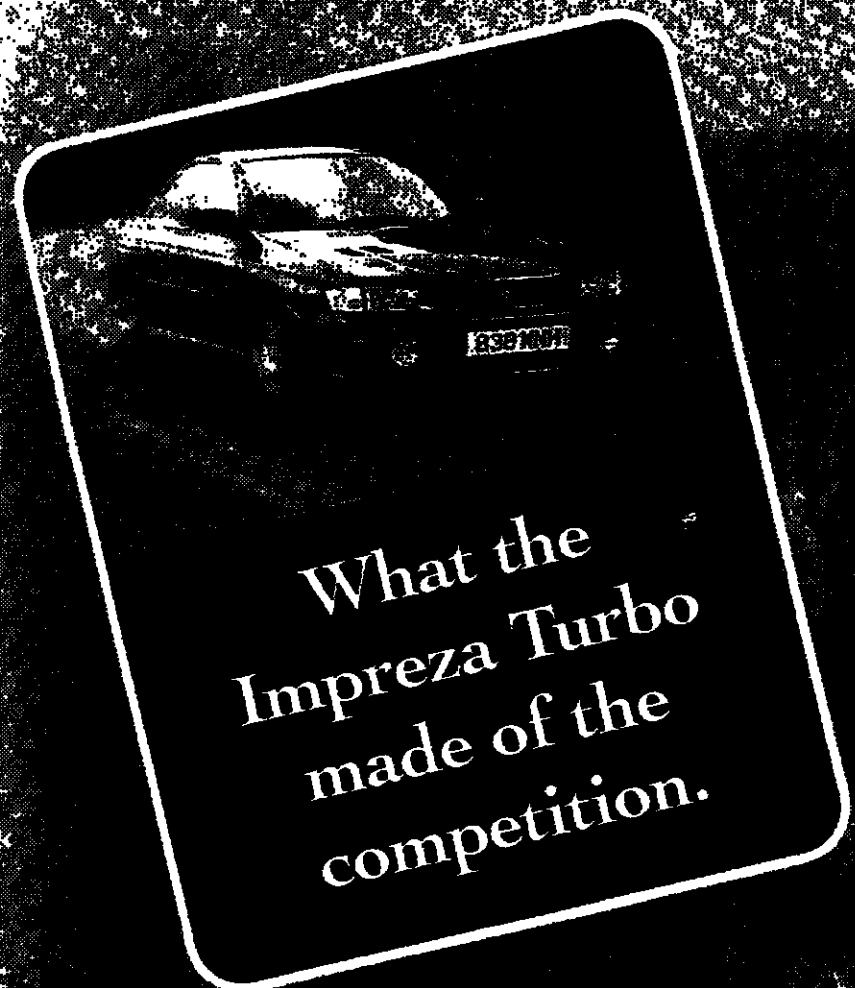
given their whole lives to a company and find themselves being edged out as the recession gets worse," Ryu Otomo, a writer, said. "There is a spreading mood of fear."

In a trend that is alarming railway operators, many people are choosing to kill themselves by leaping in front of trains. On Monday, train services in the Tokyo area were thrown into chaos when four men in their fifties chose this method of ending it all.

It was the highest one-day toll in the capital since November 23, when four middle-aged men threw themselves in front of trains on a national holiday. "The situation is becoming very serious," said a spokesman for East Japan Railways Company, which operates some of the busiest lines in the Tokyo area. "There are no effective measures we can take to prevent these suicides."

The company says there were 78 suicides on its Tokyo region lines in the nine months from March to December last year, compared to 77 in the previous 12 months. A surge in recent weeks is likely to lift the total for fiscal 1998, which ends on March 31, closer to 90.

Japanese commuters spend countless hours of their lives on packed trains, umbilical cords between their homes and workplaces. For that reason, Mr Otomo believes, they may see the railway lines as a "familiar and homely place" to die.



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US 'sorry for death squads'

President apologises to Guatemala over American backing for murderous juntas, Ian Brodie reports

PRESIDENT Clinton has apologised for a dark and long-buried episode of America's foreign policy: its support for brutal right-wing governments in Guatemala during a 36-year civil war in which 200,000 people died.

Making an admission that many Guatemalans never thought they would hear, Mr Clinton declared: "For the United States, it is important to state clearly that support for military forces and intelligence units which engaged in violence and widespread repression was wrong and the United States must not repeat that mistake."

No President before has so directly admitted the US role in the atrocities. In Washington, newly declassified intelligence documents added vivid details of the massacres, kidnappings, torture and other horrors committed by Guatemalan security forces who were trained and equipped by the CIA and US Army.

A 1962 CIA cable described entire villages being burnt to the ground because the Guatemalan Army believed the Mayan Indian peasants supported left-wing guerrillas. "The army can be expected to give no quarter to combatants and non-combatants alike," the cable said. Another document told how, in the 1980s, Guatemalan military intelligence agents dumped suspected guerrillas, dead or alive, out of aircraft into the sea. "In this way, they have been able to remove the majority of the evidence showing that prisoners were tortured and killed."

In a 1966 memo, a State Department security official said that he had established a "safe

house" inside the Guatemalan presidential palace where local security agents could meet their US contacts. The premises became headquarters for officers waging Guatemala's "dirty war".

Mr Clinton spoke at a cross-section of citizens at a "peace round table" in Guatemala City. One woman, Femina Lopez, told him how her husband was kidnapped 17 years ago and to this day she does not know if he is alive or dead. "I am just one example of the thousands of women and chil-

'Support for forces engaged in repression was wrong'

dren who became victims of the war," she said.

Along with his message of contrition, Mr Clinton promised Washington's support for harmony and reconciliation in Guatemala where the war ended in 1996 with United Nations help. He explained how US backing for right-wing governments and covert support for actions against left-wing insurgents throughout Central America — in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua — had created "bit-

LINKS

<http://www.derechos.org/guatemala>
— Guatemala Human Rights
<http://www.lapaz.com.gt/unesco.htm>
— Historical Clarification Commission Agreement

ter divisions" within the United States. All the countries are now under democratic rule. For many years US administrations, Democratic and Republican, intervened at will in the region, a habit reinforced during the Cold War by the threat of communism.

In Guatemala in 1954, during the Eisenhower Administration, CIA support enabled a military junta to overthrow the left-wing regime.

From then on, the Americans sided with a military that became synonymous with repression and abuse. Last month a report from the Historical Clarification Commission, which grew out of the UN's role, found that the CIA and US Army advisers were pivotal to the state-sponsored acts of genocide committed by the Guatemalan Army, mainly against the Mayans.

The report blamed the army for 93 per cent of all massacres, tortures, disappearances and killings during the war. Left-wing guerrillas were responsible for only 3 per cent of atrocities, the report said.

During an arrival ceremony at the palace, Mr Clinton praised Guatemala's efforts to move towards democracy and reconciliation and reaffirmed America's commitment to shed light on the dark events of the past so that they are never repeated.

His words were welcomed by government and opposition politicians, but they were not enough for some. Facing a line of riot police and troops with assault rifles outside the palace, several hundred students, trade unionists and other demonstrators burnt US flags and chanted: "Yankee, go home."



A protester holds the picture of a "disappeared" woman in Guatemala City yesterday

Reagan launched crusade to drive out communists

WHEN President Reagan took office in January 1980, critics say US policy in Central America went haywire. Reversing several years of promoting peaceful reform, Ronald Reagan's Administration launched an ideologically driven crusade of anti-communist conflict that cost hundreds of thousands of lives and left the region economically devastated.

For most of this century the United States has aggressively protected its interests in Central America, viewed in Washington as its own backyard. In a region where democracy had not taken root, that usually meant backing dictators.

But US policy shifted dramatically

Washington gave dictators arms to block 'domino effect', writes David Adams

with the fall of Anastasio Somoza, the Nicaraguan dictator. The ousting of Somoza by the Sandinista revolutionary army rocked the region and plunged Central America into the Cold War. Fears of a communist takeover prompted Mr Reagan to order the swift increase of military aid to the region, to counter Cuban and Soviet influence.

But defending the region from the so-called "domino effect" of communist expansion meant arming right-wing military regimes in Guate-

ma, Honduras and El Salvador. Tragically, Washington failed to foresee — or was willing to turn a blind eye to — the horror that would ensue.

Over the next decade the US pumped an estimated \$8 billion (£5 billion) to \$10 billion into the region, much of it spent on military equipment and training. In El Salvador alone, the US spent \$1 million a day for most of the decade.

US aid only strengthened the hand of right-wing military leaders in the region, who engaged in a vio-

lent campaign to wipe out left-wing activists. The worst atrocities were in El Salvador and Guatemala where an estimated 300,000 people were killed and millions uprooted.

Meanwhile, the US was secretly arming and training the Contras, a Nicaraguan resistance army fighting to overthrow the Sandinistas.

Allegations that US officials covered up human rights abuses by their allies in the region have gained credence over the years as damaging documents have been unclassified. In some cases evidence has emerged of involvement by US troops, and more particularly the CIA, in abuses.

Political decisions were made in Washington to hide the truth from an American public with little stomach for war after Vietnam. In Honduras, for example, US officials brushed up information about the murder of left-wing activists by the military. A recent article by the former US Ambassador to Honduras, Jack Birns, describes how he was instructed to "discontinue reporting human rights violations in official channels".

Mr Birns and other academic experts now maintain that the Central American wars were not simply brutal, they were unnecessary. He believes diplomacy, not US support for armed conflict, could have brought peace more quickly to the region.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Anger at Russian censorship move

Moscow: A censorship Bill aimed at stemming the tide of violence and pornography that has saturated Russian television channels in recent years is itself causing outrage (Anna Blundy writes). The Russian press has reacted furiously to the proposed censorship by the Communist-dominated lower house, the State Duma. *Komsomolskaya Pravda's* front page yesterday was devoted to a raunchily illustrated accusation that Communists are out to deprive the viewing public of Western erotica. President Yeltsin has promised to veto the Bill when it comes to him for signature. The Bill comes at a time when the stability of the Government depends on Communist support and the Communist Party is eager to flaunt its increasing influence.

Three die in avalanche

Rome: A German mother, 58, her daughter, 28, and a German man, 61, were killed in Italy's Alto Adige region when they were engulfed by an avalanche that they set off themselves after venturing off piste (John Phillips writes). Police said their bodies were pushed some 9,000ft down the mountain by the wall of snow. The accident underlined official warnings that warmer temperatures after heavy snowfalls are making snow conditions treacherously unstable again in the Alps and Apennines.

Italy reviews bases

Rome: America and Italy are to set up a joint commission to review the rules governing US bases on Italian soil, following the tragedy a year ago in northern Italy when a low-flying jet on a Nato training flight from Aviano severed a cable-car wire, sending 20 people plunging to their deaths (Richard Owen writes). The move follows a wave of anger in Italy over last week's acquittal by a US military court of the pilot.

Israel convicts ex-spy

Tel Aviv: A court convicted yesterday a retired Mossad agent of fabricating intelligence that reportedly could have led to war with Syria almost two years ago. Details were not disclosed by the court but according to Israeli reports Yehuda Gil, 64, told his superiors that President Assad of Syria was planning a military strike to seize part of the Golan Heights captured by Israel in 1967. Gil, to be sentenced later, faces up to 15 years in jail. (AP)

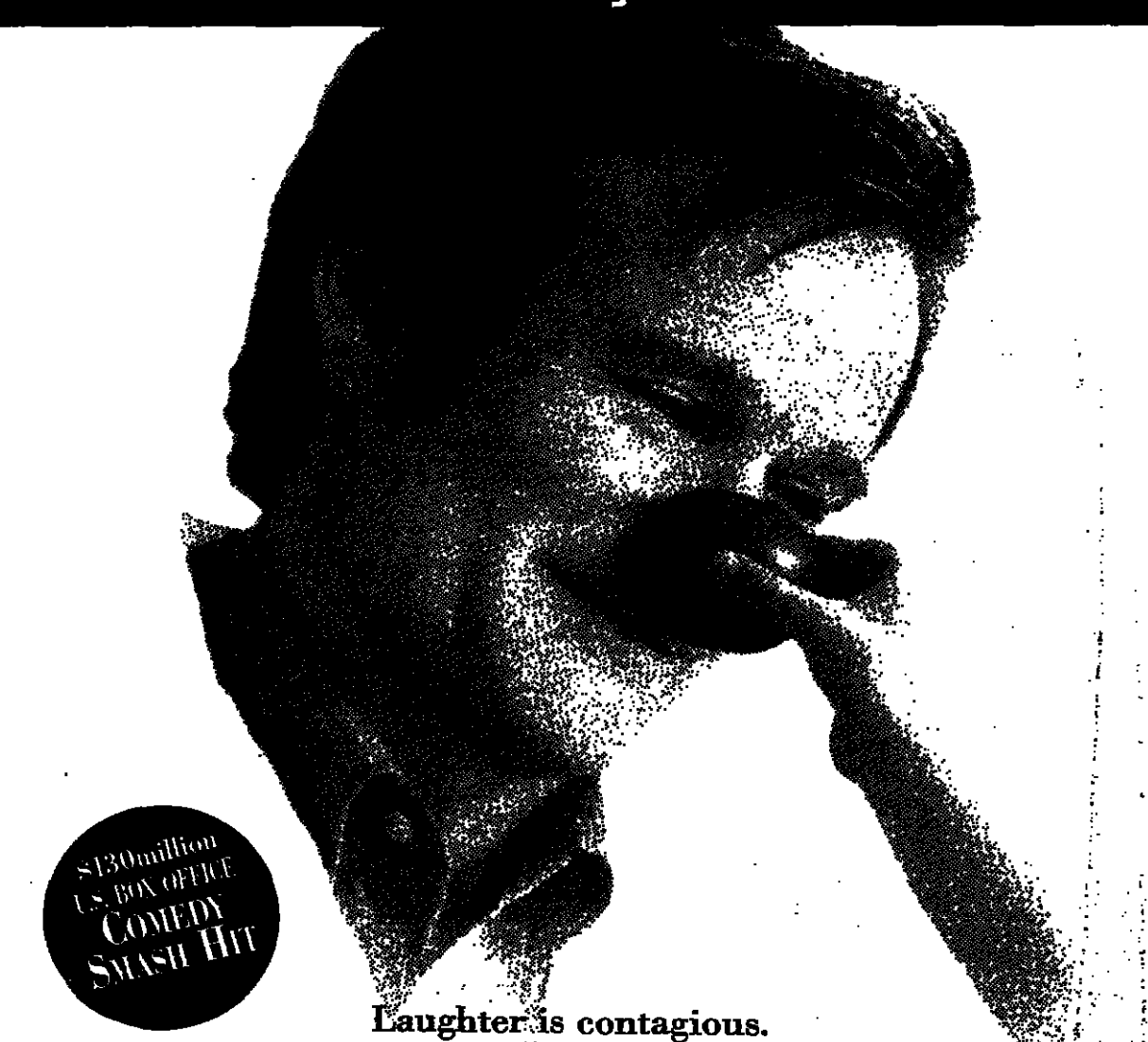
Hong Kong critics fail

Hong Kong: A no-confidence motion against Elsie Lung, Justice Secretary, over her handling of issues linked to China, was rejected by the territory's legislature sparking new criticism from pro-democracy lawmakers. The challenge followed a decision last year not to prosecute Sally Au, a pro-China publishing tycoon, in an alleged circulation fraud involving *The Hong Kong Standard* newspaper. (Reuters)

Church gunmen kills 4

Gonzales, Louisiana: A gunman burst into a church service and opened fire as he walked down the aisle, killing his wife, child and a member of the congregation and injuring four others, two critically. Shon Miller also fatally shot his mother-in-law at home before going to the New St John Fellowship Baptist Church, police chief Bill Landry said. The gunman fled but was wounded and caught in a shoot-out with police. (AP)

From the Director of 'The Nutty Professor' and 'Liar Liar'



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Galleria girls: Fast Times at Ridgmont High

Paradise lost for shop-worn Valley Girls of LA

FROM GILES WHITTELL
IN LOS ANGELES

THEY, like, hung out. They talked in a strange and almost verbiage. But most of all they shopped, turning conspicuous consumption into both an art form and their version of rebellion. They were the Valley Girls, and now they have nowhere to go (like, totally).

With the closure this month of a giant shopping mall at the junction of two freeways in the San Fernando Valley, the curtain will fall on a non-too-glorious era in the social

history of Los Angeles: one that celebrated shoes, malls, make-up and dating to the exclusion of the wider world and, some say, reached its apotheosis in Monica Lewinsky.

Ground zero for the Valley Girls was the 900,000 sq ft Sherman Oaks Galleria, a monstrous mall made famous by Frank Zappa and his daughter, Moon Unit. As their 1962 hit single, *Valley Girls*, proclaimed: "Like, ohmigod! Like totally! Girls like the Galleria. And, like, all these, like, really great shoe stores."

In the same year, Amy Heckerling directed what became the seminal

cinematic study of Valley Girls, *Fast Times at Ridgmont High*. Shot largely in the Galleria, it featured a young Sean Penn as an urban surfer-dude bringing his vacuous, beach drawl and surging libido into the mall-bound lives of two quintessential teenage airheads played by Jennifer Jason Leigh and Phoebe Cates.

Now the Galleria is all but dead. Closed for repairs by the 1994 Northridge earthquake, it never truly recovered. Those shops still open around its cavernous four-level atrium are holding frantic liquidation sales and developers are planning to

reopen it in two years, mainly as an office complex. An eyesore by any standards, the Galleria has few mourners.

The typical former Valley Girl is loath to own up to her misspent teen years in its bowels, when she and her parents' credit cards were symbols of the fragility of Reaganomics. As Kevin Starr, a prominent local historian, put it: "Right now, the Valley Girl is 35 and about to be a partner in a downtown law firm."

Promoters of Los Angeles have moved on, to the gleaming new Getty Centre, a crucible of high cul-

ture not five miles away, next to the same freeway but facing south towards the Pacific and the booming west side. The Galleria, by contrast, stands in near-permanent smog in a neighbourhood best known for churning out soft-core pornography.

Pop culture has moved on, too. First, Aaron Spelling trained teenagers' gaze on Beverly Hills 90210, the most self-consciously sophisticated zipcode in the metropolis. Then Ms Lewinsky showed the world that as an alumna of Beverly Hills High School she was not an airhead after all. At least, she tried to.

Clinton marriage 'under new strain'

WITH Monica Lewinsky refusing to leave the headlines and accusations about past infidelities continuing to surface, President Clinton's marriage was reported yesterday to be under renewed strain.

Mrs Clinton was quoted as saying: "I don't want to be in the same room as him, let alone the same bed." This was said to be the real reason why she had not joined her husband on his tour of Central America — not a bad back, as her office had explained.

Fox News, the American cable news channel, said its source was close to the Clintons and added that the chilly relations had also been the reason why the couple cut short a skiing trip to Utah earlier this month.

The couple stayed at the home of the film mogul Jerry Katzenberg with their daughter

Damian Whitworth in Washington hears reports of shouting matches and humiliation for Hillary

ter Chelsea, to celebrate her 19th birthday. But when she returned to Stanford University they decided to fly back to Washington rather than stay a planned extra day, moving so swiftly that a plane was not available to transport the travelling press contingent.

Mr Clinton said he wanted to go home early "so we can get a better night's sleep", and this was the line repeated by his spokesman, who said they had busy schedules.

But Marsha Berry, Mrs Clinton's spokeswoman, said that Mrs Clinton's back was to blame.

Rita Cosby, of Fox News

said: "The First Couple had a shouting match, which left Hillary Clinton storming out of the room saying she wanted her bags."

The holiday came only days after a television interview with Juanita Broadrick, an Arkansas woman, who claimed tearfully that she was raped by Mr Clinton when he was attorney-general of the state 20 years ago.

Ms Cosby added: "A Clinton family friend [says] that the First Couple barely speak in private, that they have nothing to talk about any more. The only thing they have in common is Chelsea."

Mrs Clinton, who went to New York within 48 hours of the skiing trip, has had back problems since last spring. Ms Berry said it was not appropriate to discuss the Clintons' sleeping arrangements.

A report by Matt Drudge, the Internet gossip columnist, claimed the couple were experimenting with a "trial separation", which involved giving each other as much room as possible.

He quoted a "Hillary supporter" in the White House as saying that the Broadrick story had led to the new deterioration in relations.

"She was humiliated. He can't keep doing this to her. He promised her over and over again that this rape story was not going to amount to anything. It has caused a serious breakdown," the source said.

Drudge also wrote that a Secret Service agent who gave evidence about the Lewinsky affair before the grand jury, was considering leaving his job because of the hostility between the Clintons. "They may look like they are together, like a couple. They are not. It is all played for the cameras," said the agent.

A former Clinton adviser, who was said by Drudge still to be close to the couple, was quoted as saying: "This is more than a fight, but they have gone through a separation like this before. They always come back to each other... however, this time it looks damn serious."



Showing the strain: President Clinton and Hillary, forced together at a recent dinner

Family funeral for a folk hero

BY GILES WHITTELL

JOE DIMAGGIO, revered as an icon of baseball but also of the art of being a celebrity, was buried yesterday in San Francisco, near his home town of Martinez. His estranged son was among the pallbearers at a funeral attended only by family members.

President Clinton, Tom Hanks and Jack Nicholson were reportedly among those who asked to attend but were turned down in accordance with Dimaggio's instructions. "Joe insisted that his funeral be a private religious service," his lawyer, Morris Engelberg, said before the event.

About 40 close friends and family members filed into the Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church in the city's Italian North Beach district, where Dimaggio grew up and married his first wife, Dorothy Arnold, in 1939. His coffin was decorated with white orchids matching lavish floral arrangements throughout the building, a spokeswoman said.

Though he was married briefly to Marilyn Monroe, Dimaggio loathed Hollywood's personality cults and never publicly discussed his marriage after their divorce in 1954.

He had not seen his only child, Joe Jr., for two years, but left him a trust fund in his will to yield \$20,000 (£12,000) a year for life. The younger Dimaggio, who lives in a trailer and works in a junkyard, carried the coffin from the church with three relatives.

Whitewater figure back in court

FROM IAN BRODIE
IN WASHINGTON

ONE woman's stubbornness has prevented prosecutors finding out if President Clinton lied under oath about his business dealings, a jury was told in Little Rock, Arkansas. The claim was made at the opening of the third trial in three years for Susan McDougal, 44, a pivotal but until now largely silent figure in the original Whitewater fiasco.

This time, the jury must decide if she is shielding the President or if Kenneth Starr, the independent prosecutor, tried to bully her into giving false evidence against Bill and Hillary Clinton.

McDougal has already spent 18 months in prison for civil contempt of court for refusing to answer questions before Mr Starr's Whitewater Grand Jury in Little Rock. Now she has been charged with criminal contempt and obstruction of justice for the same alleged offence.



McDougal: still silent

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Holding on to your Inner Babe

When I was a little girl Mother's Day meant joining a queue of sticky-fingered children at the altar of our local church to be given, by the priest, a posy of primroses and early catkins so fragile that even though the stems were wrapped in damp moss, the flowers had usually started to wilt before we could hand them over to our mothers.

A generation later the modern mother is unlikely to be impressed by the rustic simplicity of wild flowers and wet moss — at least if the big stores' publicity is to be believed.

There is a peculiar air of menace — militancy even — about the build-up to March 14. "Do not forget this date. It's Mother's Day and it's payback time," says my copy of Selfridges' *Yellow* magazine. "Make her day," urged the posters in Marks & Spencer. Blimey. It makes you wonder what kind of mothers their copywriters can have had.

It is possible that Germaine Greer — who goes to some length in her new book to remind us that the advances of feminism notwithstanding, mothers remain slighted, exploited, insulted and undervalued — might find some attraction in this portrayal of menacing motherhood. But for some reason I find myself irritated by it both as a daughter and a mother. I don't care for notions of coercion and obligation where these relationships are concerned. If my son buys me a present for Mother's Day I would like it to be because he felt like it, not because he was nagged into it by retailers.

Suppose that I have been a good enough mother for my son to feel that I deserve a reward. What sort of thing might he buy me? There is a delicate psychology here, well worth mastering if you are a child.

You may think that most of the time your mother is a harrikan whose conversation consists of the randomly repeated phrases "pick that up", "have you finished your homework?" and "what time do you call this?". You may be surprised to learn that she would not disagree. But she blames it on you. Before you came along she was a babe with a rock-hard stomach and a string of admirers, none of whom ever heard her scream "get your feet off that sofa or I will kill you".

If you are clever you will buy her some little object which subtly suggests that her Inner Babe has not altogether vanished. The results — in terms of amnesia about the nine o'clock telly watershed, a temporary amnesty in her patrols of your sex life and so on — may be well worthwhile.

CUTTING EDGE

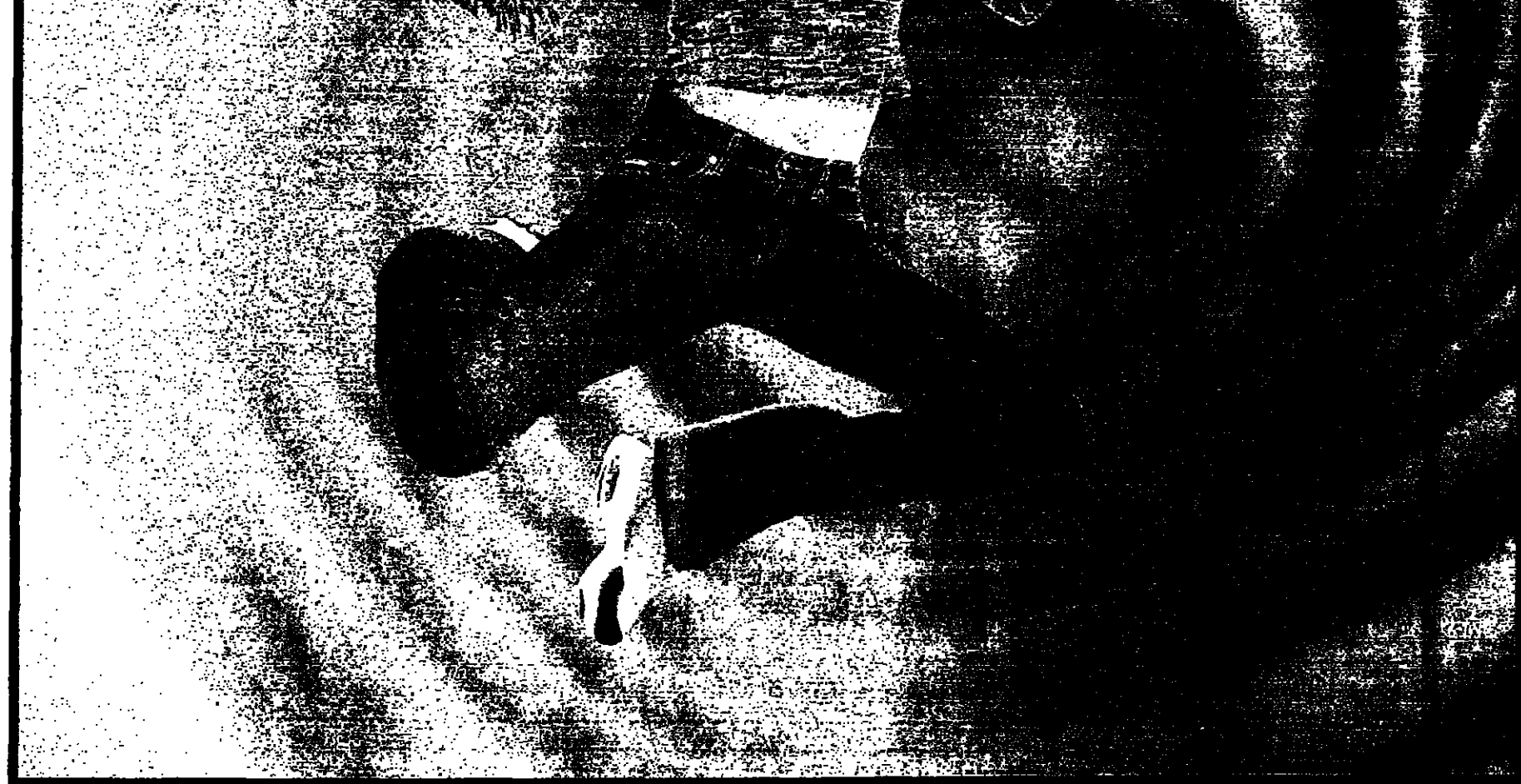
JANE SHILLING

So, where to begin? Flowers and chocolates are best avoided. Unless they are exquisite (and therefore very expensive) or home-produced, they reek of duty unwillingly done. But for a maximum budget of £20 you can buy the Old Thing real jewels. At Marks & Spencer an elegant necklace of black freshwater pearls on a silvery chain looks far more expensive than its price of £12.

Oasis has a range of sterling silver jewellery beautifully packaged in pale turquoise boxes. A silver sphere on a foxtail chain is £9.99. Black freshwater pearl drops on silver hoops are £6.99. A pair of tiny turquoise studs costs £4.99 and a mother-of-pearl inlaid dog tag on a chain is £14.99.

The Victorians, with their fondness for sentimental puns, would have thought Oasis's luscious purple-velvet pansy (*Pensee*) hair-clips, £4.99, a perfect Mother's Day present (a matching hairband is £3.99).

L'Occitane, too, is good on luxury at pocket-money prices. Generous



"If you are clever you will buy her some little object for Mother's Day which subtly suggests that her Inner Babe has not altogether vanished"

cubes of appropriately named *Bonne Mère* soap scented with lavender, verbena or wild rose are £2.45, small, £3.95 large. Eaux de Toilette in scents redolent of rural France — jasmine, honeysuckle, rosewood, vanilla — are £8.50 for an old-fashioned, gold-topped bottle, or £16.95 for a large atomiser. Tiny bottles of flower essences or handbag-sized tins of solid perfume are £4.95. L'Occitane giftwraps beautifully at no extra cost.

Muji is another pocket money

treasure trove. A silver mesh pencil or make-up case is £2.95. Good-sized silver mesh vanity cases are £5.50 small, £6.50 large. A brushed-aluminium handbag mirror is £3.50 and matching atomiser £5.95. Pure silk body sponges and wash cloths are £4.95. And the most kitchen-shy of mothers would be pleased with Muji's elegant red lacquer chopsticks from £2.95 a pair, or the fragile-looking thistle-egg blue porcelain bowls and dishes, from £2.25.

Buying make-up for other people is an enterprise full of pitfalls. But Warehouse has smart, clear-plastic pouches with four little bottles of nail varnish, or three lipsticks and a lip gloss, in subtle, pinkish colours, that would flatter any skin tone for £10 each.

Children with an affection for Pooh Bear may be captivated by La Senza's silk camisole and knicker sets, £20. In a heavenly hyacinth blue, printed with Pooh holding a bunch of flowers in his paw. In general I share Dorothy Parker's nauseated reaction to Winnie the Pooh and his chums, but for some reason I found these garments adorable.

If you are not sure of your mother's reaction to this sort of camp whimsy, you would be on safer ground at Accessorize with a sap-phrase or cyclamen sari bag embroidered with gold thread and mirror fragments from £9.99; an intricate "pearl" choker, from £5.99; a pale blue beaded change purse, £6.99; or a matching pale blue glass bead

necklace, £3.99, and bracelet, £2.99. And if all this still seems too girly, the sophisticated child might try his mother with a handbag-sized, ring-binder notebook covered in an amazing material that reflects a riot of pink roses and jasmine from one angle, flipping to an ethereal blue background scattered with multicoloured butterflies. At £9.99 it may be a long way from primroses and damp moss, but it's not quite the raw cynicism of "payback time" either.

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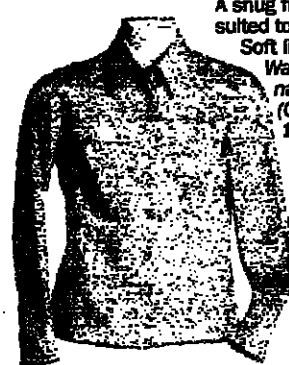
Wales and Ireland
Bangor, Belfast, Cork, Halkyn (North Wales), Llanelli (Cross Hands), Monmouth, Pencoeed, St. Clears (Carmarthen), Waterford (Ireland), Wrexham.

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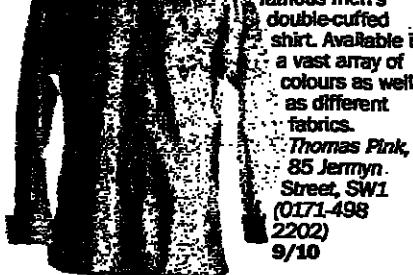
FINE BLUE, £35
A snug fit that is better suited to smaller frames. Soft, lightweight cotton. Warehouse nationwide (0171-278 3491) 10/10



YELLOW FLORAL, £125
This pretty shirt is cropped at the hips and will not budge under trousers. Available in red or blue flower Liberty print. Elspeth Gibson, 7 Port Street, SW1 (0171-235 0801) 10/10



LILAC STRIPE, £49.50
Fitted female version of Thomas Pink's famous men's double-cuffed shirt. Available in a vast array of colours as well as different fabrics. Thomas Pink, 85 Jermyn Street, SW1 (0202-498 2202) 9/10

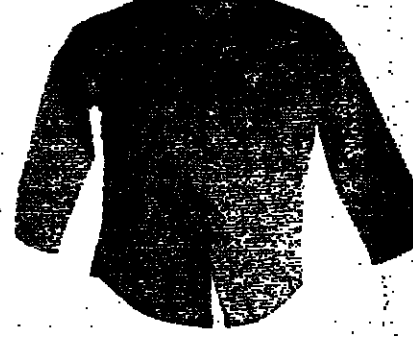


LILAC, £20
Plain cotton shirt in this season's "it" colour with three-quarter length sleeves, side slits and a front pocket. Miss Selfridge nationwide (0181-910 1375) 9/10

PALE BLUE, £48.99
Good quality cotton shirt with a front pocket that conceals buttons. It has sleeves with side slits, and a front pocket. Less fitted cropped shape. In Wear, department stores nationwide (0181-871 2155) 7/10



STONE, £30
Extremely comfortable in stretch fabric. Great value for money. Available in pale blue, pink, white and slate grey. Gap nationwide (0800-427 789) 10/10



COMPILED BY DEBORAH BRETT

The drawing trousers on last week's Style page are by Betty Jackson. They are available from her shop at 311 Brompton Road, London, SW3 (0171-589 7884).

HOT TIP

The idea of putting caviare on your face may sound strange but bear with us. Ingrid Millet's *Perle De Caviar* is an intensive serum, or moisturiser, that contains 42 per cent caviare (most creams contain 3-7 per cent). Four ampoules cost £39; use one a month. From beauty salons nationwide and mail order (0171-431 1033).

Objects of desire

Agatha, usually known for brassy costume jewellery, has a range of delicate faux antique earrings. From £26 at Agatha, 4 South Molton Street, London, W1 (0171-495 2779).

This linen bangle bag dangles elegantly from the wrist. £35 from Whistles, 12-14 St Christopher's Place, W1 (0171-487 4484).

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Want a baby? Read this first

Model Betti Romani had romantic hopes of life after a baby. Just 19 months later, she and her partner are living apart. Sally Morris reports

A year ago Betti Romani, a striking Italian model, and her partner Sebastian Vince took part in a BBC documentary about first-time parents, in which their expectations of parenthood were contrasted with the reality of life in the first months after the birth of their daughter, Arianna.

It was a salutary but sometimes funny story and, for those viewers with children, a reassuringly familiar one.

A year later, however, things have changed dramatically. Betti and Sebastian split up last September,

a week before Arianna's first birthday. They got back together in November but are still living apart.

Betti, 27, lives with 19-month-old Arianna in the couple's one-bedroom North London flat while Sebastian lives in the West Midlands, running a specialist bread business. He sees them at weekends.

Betti is a different woman from the confused new mother I interviewed last year. Although she still lacks self-confidence, she also displays a new-found strength. In a follow-up documentary to be shown this Sunday, she admits that her romantic notion of motherhood and family life has been destroyed.

"I had no idea how much strain having a baby can put on your relationship," she says. "Having Arianna showed up the cracks already there."

Although Sebastian's reason for leaving his job as a copywriter and setting up his bread business in the West Midlands was purely a business one, the distance between them did not help.

"I would travel up to visit him on the train with Arianna but he was tired and wanted to relax, and I was frustrated because I wanted us to do things as a family. Sebastian is very good with Arianna and loves her, but as a mother I think that you accept responsibility for your child and the sacrifices you have to make more quickly than men do. They want to hold on to their old

life. Of course I would like to go out and have a good time, but I don't want to come home to a babysitter when I've been drinking. It's wrong."

As a childless couple, Betti and Sebastian mixed with models and advertising executives. Staying out late was the norm. Yet after Arianna's arrival their lives became polarised: Betti at home, Sebastian at work. She resented him continuing his social life; he resented the pressure on him.

"For the partner out at work, daytime life continues pretty much as before," says Betti. "It's the romance at home that goes. I did try to look good and to be warm for Sebastian — sex is very important to me mentally as well as physically — but you cannot forget that there is always a baby around. Arianna is still awake and playing in the evenings."

"Suddenly we just weren't kissing each other any more. When Sebastian came home from work late because he had been out with his friends, I would be upset and criticise him. Then he would feel even less like coming home early the next night."

"When you are home alone with a baby, you don't feel you can compete with friends who are free to stay out when they like, and you feel you are being shut out. If you are insecure, this makes you worse."

"Even my close girlfriends who don't have children ring up to suggest that we go out, and say 'I'll see you in half an hour,' without realising how long it takes to get anywhere

when you have to get a baby ready — and when you get there you can't relax because the baby might cry."

When I visited Betti and Sebastian last year their flat was full of works of art and fresh flowers on low shelves

and tables. Now, as in any other family home, the low shelves are stacked with plastic toys, trails of broken biscuit weaves across the floor, and Telenovelas have replaced Tarantino on the video. For those in harmony it is a scene symbolic of family bonding. For those with problems it is another example of how your life is no longer your own.

The split with Sebastian was sudden, shocking and painful, says Betti. "I was very hurt and you feel especially vulnerable when you have a small child," she says. "I was frightened by the idea of being a single mother — not because I thought that I couldn't rebuild my life, or that I'd never find another man, but because I felt sad that we had split up without considering the consequences properly. I couldn't con-



"Having Arianna has made me stronger as a person. I have something to fight for. When I have low moments I look at her and I love her so much that it lifts me"

when you have to get a baby ready — and when you get there you can't relax because the baby might cry."

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Always judge a cookbook by its novel ingredients

Even weekend cooks, after flicking through a recipe book or two, can feel bold enough to experiment with ingredients themselves.

And, if the mood grabs you, there's nothing to stop you visiting these people in hospital as they recuperate from their lunch that oysters and meringues would make a novel marriage in fact it proved so novel that even Mickey Rooney and Zsa Zsa Gabor, who have shown time and again over the years that they will wed almost anything, would think twice before marrying these two items.

As a result of this difficulty in dreaming up fresh combinations of ingredients, you find that people who sit down to write a recipe book often end up not writing many of these recipes themselves. They just fill the pages with other people's recipes. They can do this because recipes seem to exist in a copyright limbo whereby you can fatten up a book with other chefs' recipes, as in: "I always eat this dish at Harry's Bar when I'm in Venice, where Arrigo created the following wonderful recipe..."

This is why the only people still inventing recipes are manufacturers of tinned foods. They think you're more likely to buy their tins if they print a handy recipe on the back of the can. This combines their product range in hitherto unimaginable "serving suggestions", such as "tomato soup with cling peaches, anchovies and sweetcorn nibbles — an easily prepared meal that can be enjoyed by all the family, providing their senses have been dulled by long addiction to recreational drugs".

Writers, of course, are shy about plagiarising other people's recipes, believ-

ing that exercising their own imagination is how they earn their crust. Hence in *The Hemingway Cookbook*, which is being published to celebrate Hemingway's centenary, Ernest shares his personal he-man recipes for fillet of lion ("First obtain your lion. Skin him and remove the two strips of tenderness from either side of the backbone. These should hang overnight in a tree out of reach of hyenas"), and for bear steaks (which Papa liked to eat on sourdough

pancakes spread with marmalade).

But Hemingway is far from being the only great writer to have squandered Sunday afternoons in the kitchen, juggling hot saucissons to invent dishes that reflect his literary personality. Take Harold Pinter. He has published a collection of recipes that are cooked wherever the literary intelligentsia meet to eat. The star is Harold's famous bolognese sauce: "Get some beef. Some pork, too. Mince them. Fine. Not too fine. You follow? Not too fringing fine. What good would that do? It would do no good at all. Too fine, that would get us nowhere. Fry the meat. Then pause. You fried the onions? No? I didn't think I'd need to mention the frying of the onions. I thought, everyone knows about the frying of the frigging onions. Hey Frank, you know about the onions? [Frank nods.] See, even Frank knows. But you, you're a non-starter."

"Why am I wasting my time teaching you anything? Briggs just won't believe it when he finds out. I can only assume that you are a poof! Is that what you are? A poof are you? You make me sick." [Harold stomps out of the room and someone telephones for a curry.]

And here is Woodrow Wyatt's pet recipe for pancakes: "Get some plain flour. Before measuring 8oz into a mixing bowl, call Margaret and tell her how impressive she looked on *News at Ten* last night. On your way back to the kitchen, open the front door to a minion from Clarence House delivering a lunch invitation from the Queen Mother."

"As you scribble a reply, find yourself interrupted by a call from Henry [Kissinger] seeking advice on the best way to handle Kosovo. Tell him it's best served chilled, with blinis. Fetch eggs, milk and sugar, and tell cook to do the rest since you'll be too busy helping Tony and Gordon to run the country."

Noel Coward — who liked his pancakes "very, very flat, like Norfolk" — published *The Noel Coward Singing Cookbook* to cheer everyone up after the war. It was there that Coward first unveiled his famous "Duck Casserole With Sage" ("Don't be too stingy with the sage. Mrs Worthington! Don't be too stingy with the sage! First you get a petite duckling; the best ones are from Brest! And the width of the pot matters a lot, for your dish to be a success! Remove the guts, Mrs Worthington! For cooking times, please turn the page!").

Many scholars now believe that it was a passion for cooking that cheered up Dorothy Parker in her darker moments. It appears that *Resumé*, her famous poem on life and suicide ("Razors pain you; rivers are damp..."), began life as the introduction to Parker's Party Food ("Kidney tastes vicious; I don't like clams; Lamb's delicious; but not with jams; Soak summer berries in Earl Grey tea; Pour in some sherry; Bon appetit!").

Of course, it doesn't always run as smoothly as bollandaise. For instance, Stephen King's *Favourite Recipes* ("Got d'agneau: buy a lamb from a nearby farm. Slaughter the lamb by chasing it around the house with a large chainsaw, to the accompaniment of loud, jangly music...") had to be withdrawn from bookshops after being panned: not by literary critics, but by the US Food and Drug Administration.

King says the whole sorry episode still leaves a nasty taste in his mouth.

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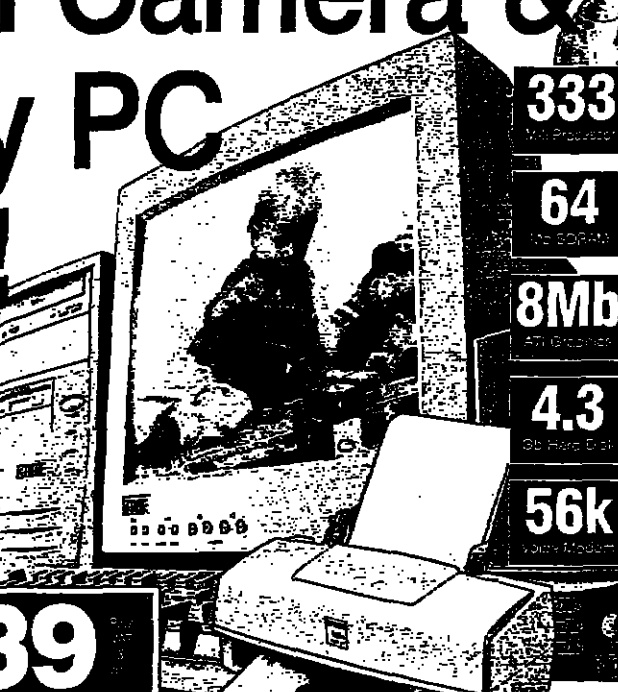
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Playgrounds for political correctness

Race zealots threaten our children, says George Bridges

The dock is already crammed full of Britain's police. Now it is to be stuffed with teachers. According to Ofsted, the school inspectorate, teachers in "many schools" are guilty of institutional racism.

Bunkum. Ofsted's kangaroo court is guilty of a miscarriage of justice, the consequences of which could be more heinous than the supposed crime itself. Britain's education system is guilty of institutional incompetence, not racism. More than in one in five adults, whatever their colour, can barely read a bus timetable. Instead of addressing this failure, we have become distracted by those who argue that just because a child is from a particular ethnic group, he or she is more likely to join that one fifth of the adult population. Such claims, based on a premise that colour and ability are linked, smack of racism themselves. They also ignore the facts. The performance of Indian, Chinese and other Asian pupils continues to outstrip those of white children.

So why the fuss? Those who have driven the debate do not want primarily to equip children for the world, but to change the world. The classroom, like the police canteen, has become a focus for political struggle rather than better standards.

For the ideologues education, as the American academic Paul Gottfried observed, is now about "changing social structures and attitudes". Sailing under the flag of racial equality, with the favourable wind of the Macpherson inquiry behind it, an armada of political ideologues is approaching Britain's schools.

You don't need to look in the crystal ball, just read their books. On the shelves of the Institute of Education, the academy of teaching practice, can be found one particularly revealing title: *Education towards Race Equality*.

The author argues that if racism is seen as a set of prejudices held by a minority, this "denies the structural aspects of racism in the education system and in society". As a result, education needs to be "not merely reformed, but transformed". Quoting a colleague's work, teachers are told: "Education will have to be reconceptualised in the context of the culture and the social formation in which it takes place... People must use new ideas to change the mental outlook of the whole of society". Welcome to PC world.

The logical consequence of reform is a change to the whole national curriculum. Just such a demand was made by the authors of the Macpherson report. And it was not issued in a vacuum.

A programme for reform already exists in *Ethnic Relations and Schooling*. This includes the claim that the curriculum is guilty of reflecting "the ethos and culture of the white middle-class Anglo-Saxon". It excludes the significant input from so-called Third World countries. Worse, the curriculum has been "increasingly directed

towards the achievement of ideological ends".

If you're worried about the curriculum being bent for "ideological ends", you might well ask what it should be doing changing "the mental outlook of the whole of society". But those using race to transform our classrooms have a suitably revolutionary approach to English language. The PC grammar runs thus: I am motivated by compassion, you are motivated by politics, and the curriculum is riddled with ideology.

So everything should be taught to let pupils "reflect critically about the multi-faceted causes of racism and about ethnic and cultural relationships". And they mean everything. You might think maths teaching should be a value-free zone. Two plus two makes four, whatever colour you are. Wrong. By placing the emphasis entirely upon "conceptual understanding, algorithmic performance and problem-solving", maths has become "culturally cold, barren and dead". This approach "fails to convey the power of mathematics to reveal the inequalities, differences, discriminations and orders in society which ought to be addressed".

Labour's manifesto states that more than half of 11-year-olds do not reach expected standards in maths, and yet addressing this failure is no longer the priority. Now two plus two equals an unfair division of resources between white and black.

American classrooms are dripping with "ethnomathematics", in which maths is taught with an Afrocentric bias. In *Focus on Algebra: An Integrated Approach*, of political ideologues is approaching Britain's schools.

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"NO, I TELL A LIE... IF I CAN READ MY OWN HANDWRITING, IT WAS THE SIXTEENTH..."

Unaccustomed as I am

A good speech is a work of art. Earlier this week, a large party of friends gathered at the Chelsea home of the architect, Lord Rogers of Riverside, to salute John Diamond, the writer who is fighting throat cancer. Lord Rogers spoke. Then Mr Diamond spoke. Lord Rogers will not mind my saying that Mr Diamond made the better speech. Mr Diamond has no voice.

He spoke by means of words handwritten on an overhead projector. The words were not written in advance. They were articulated as Mr Diamond thought them, by hand, deftly and deliberately. Each sentence was short, and funny. As the script unfolded we gradually grew used to the rhythm of the pen as proxy for the voice. Each of Mr Diamond's words, of humour, poignancy and affection for his wife, Nigella, were given an extraordinary dignity by the act of being handwritten in our presence.

This was speech, not text. The writing was merely a medium linking one speaking brain and many listening ones. It was far more effective than any voice synthesiser. Mr Diamond wrote with pauses, rushes and other tricks of the calligrapher's art, drawing wit and feeling from the intimate act of handwriting. I felt I could hear Mr Diamond's voice in his pen. Over in seven minutes, it was one of the most moving short speeches I have heard. It was completely silent.

Rhetoric is now all but dead. Once upon a time it joined grammar and logic in the "trivium" of the medieval liberal arts. To command an audience by the power of speech was considered an accomplishment equal to the power of argument or the power of the pen. Now oratory is an old-fashioned word and rhetorical is a term of abuse. Few people distinguish between a speech and the reading of text. Few people can write text that reads well in public. Even fewer can read it.

Yet we have not stopped giving speeches. Speech-making is a raging epidemic, a plague enveloping the social and business life of the nation, impervious to the howls of audiences, the pleading of spouses and the clamor of the Internet. I must hear a dozen speeches each week, bombarding me from lunch and dinner, lecture, reception and presentation. Most are dreadful. The art of hospitality is booming, as is that of the conference. Professional cooks are hired, with the finest

Speech-making is a raging epidemic.

Yet the art of rhetoric is dead

wines, the best of settings, the most talented musicians. There is no shortage of visual aids, amplification and reproduction. No expense is spared. Professionalism is all.

Then someone makes a speech. Civilisation suddenly has to pretend that Demosthenes and Cicero never lived. In the Middle Ages, the speaker would have been trained. He would have studied rhetoric. He would have known that a speech is the "living sentence of a working

mind". In the 17th century, Samuel Butler derided the rhetorician as a "name of tools, who takes up lodgings in a 'head' that's to be let unfurnished". But he lived in the profession of speech. The eminent Mr Pickwick knew rhetoric's first law, that speech is not spoken text, a law broken by almost every speaker today. Spontaneous oratory — the art of knowing what you want to say but not how you intend to say it — is almost confined to broadcasting.

Most speeches in my experience are read, in the words of the giver, "because I can't do it any other way". In which case, don't speak. The implication is that the audience has come merely for the pleasure of gazing on the speaker's face, as he reads what it could read far faster on its own. Read speeches are droned. They cannot respond to an audience, maintain eye contact and supply that lifeblood of rhetoric, which is the transmission of feeling. The business of oratory, said Hazlitt, is "not to inform but to rouse the mind... to add feeling to prejudice and action to feeling". Nor can written speeches rely on spontaneous humour. The written joke, dropped into a text as if in desperation, gives it not levity but lead. In his book on speech-making, John Cleese, illustrates this point by plonking a "light-bulb" joke every few paragraphs throughout the

book. Humour should emerge from content. It is the speaker's call-sign to his audience, just as laughter is "message received".

Worst of all, almost every speech goes on too long. The rarest sentence in the English language is, "Nice evening, but I thought the speeches were too short". The world cries out for more music, more food, more wine, more dancing, more questions even, but never longer speeches. Yet the same people who

endure and deplore long speeches, as soon as they are on their feet go on too long themselves. They go on too long at receptions, where the audience stands on one leg, bereft of a drink and praying for them to stop — a torture satirised by Michael Frayn in *Alarms and Excursions*. They go on too long at dinners, when everyone wants to go home. Worse, they add speeches to charity galas, needlessly imperilling the generosity of the donors. I once heard

the violinist Isaac Stern give a sublime solo performance for a charity, then ruin it with an interminable speech. Speaking for too long is a sign of nervous amateurism. Disraeli told his acolytes always to "leave the audience wondering why you had not gone on longer, rather than why you had not sat down sooner". The most famous speech in history, the Gettysburg Address, had just ten sentences and 272 words. Verbosity is the symptom of a muddled mind — poor Neil Kinnock was famously incapable of speaking briefly. Woodrow Wilson, when asked how long his speeches took to prepare, said a ten-minute speech took an hour, but a thirty-minute speech an hour, but an hour-long speech "I could start now".

In my experience the best speakers, for all their other limitations, are politicians. They make so many and must listen to so many that even

the most inept get the hang. The only thing that wrecks a politician's speaking style is when an official prepares a text. He immediately collapses into reading, losing the essence of rhetoric, the illusion of a thought springing newly minted from the mind. I remember a speech by Tony Crosland as Education Minister. He arrived late at a dinner and looked down at what his department had prepared. He grimaced and threw it at the press desk. "Report that," he barked, and gave a brilliant off-the-cuff performance. Every minister should copy.

The professionals of the conference business have developed tricks to make up for Britain's rhetorical incompetence. They have videos, amplifiers, floppies and slides. They flash a speaker's "bullet points" behind his head, as if both he and his audience were intellectually disabled. Listeners whose eyes must move back and forth from speaker to screen soon lose interest in both. It is as if a statistic is not accurate if not written down, an image not real if not screened, a message not delivered if merely spoken. Hazlitt might never have written.

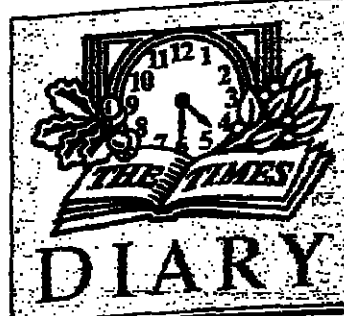
Since the urge to make a speech appears impervious to incompetence and shame, speaking must at least be taught. The flower of the medieval trivium must be revived. What was good for Aquinas must be good for the new congregations of Cyberia. Rhetoric should be in the national curriculum, taught from the cradle as the essential companion of that other neglected art, the writing of clear, brief English.

Children should be taught the lesson that John Diamond demonstrated this week, ironically through his silence. His lesson was that the spoken word is a glorious faculty, but that its glory does not ultimately rely on the voice, only on the rhetorical handling of words. So many speakers lay their words limp on the lectern or dinner table, stripped of any cadence or personality. Their speech moves only with the movement of the reading eye. Mr Diamond's handwritten rhetoric did all the things such speeches never do. It paused, scribbled, joked, hovered, caught the attention of those round him. It made us laugh and cry. It was a speech in truth. Who needs a voice when he can make words sing?

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Simon Jenkins



Charity clash

ANTHONY JULIUS has irritated Gordon Brown. The pet lawyer of the late Diana, Princess of Wales, rarely shows at meetings of the Diana Memorial Committee.

A senior bod there tells me: "Julius is one of only three the others are Diana's sister, Sarah McCorquodale, and her brother, Paul Burrell who represent her interests. It's a shame he can't find time. He's cut down on legal work."

So rarely does the would-be poet show up that the Treasury initially doubted if he was even a member. Had Julius applied his big-ish brain more, the committee might have had better luck with its £10 million memorial garden. But Julius puts in lots of work (unpaid) for the charity-helping Memorial Fund — and some wonder if Brown's committee should now retire.

HILLARY CLINTON is off to Morocco on her own, I hear. The First Lady is to escape from Bill at that wonderful palace, La Mamounia, in Marrakesh, where Churchill used to paint. The stunning gardens render it a congenial refuge, despite frisky snake charmers. The manager has dashed back from London to haul up the Stars and Stripes.

ZARA PHILLIPS (below), the 17-year-old possessor of the only pierced royal tongue, has saddled up with a dashing new friend:

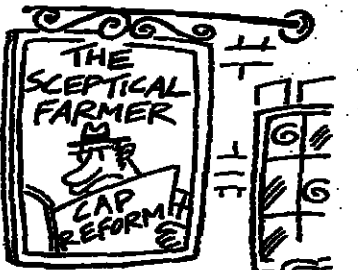


21-year-old jump jockey Richard Johnson, (above) who is second in the country this season professionally and seems to be doing even better with delightful Zara. "Her Mum, Princess Anne, is a very good friend of the National Hunt trainer David Nicholson," I hear. "Richard is Nicholson's stable jockey. That's how he met Zara, lucky fellow."

WHAT colour pyjamas does William Hague wear? When asked, as politicians are these days, he blushed: "I don't wear anything in bed." Lucky Ffion.

WHEN Paddy goes to Heaven, angels will sing away his sexual guilt. Will I See You in Heaven? Father Michael Seed's stirring collection about afterlife, includes a long submission from Ashdown — and my man with the flagellation whip sees this as an apology for his "pantdown" slip. "It's very strong, full of contrition," says Seed. "The sense of guilt is very strong."

Paddy's office is insistent: "There is nothing in it about atonement. It is about spending time in Heaven with his family." Perhaps Paddy was inspired by the re-emergence of his ex-mistress, Tricia Howard, after he announced he was retiring: "No one has measured up to Paddy before or since," she pants.



HISTORY'S circle is turning on Merseside: Derek Hatton's old Millant chums have been suspended by the national party for "not being Marxist enough". The Trots say Liverpoolians are "moving too far to the Right". Peter Taaffe, general secretary, tells me they "are too optimistic about the prospects for world capitalism". Cheerful swine.

HEREDITARY peers are consulting lawyers to wangle redundancy when they receive P45s from the Lords. Insisting they have a contract until the next Parliament, a group led by Lord Palmer may call for pay-offs similar to those won by ex-Cabinet ministers.

Lord Alton of Megiddo croaks: "There are rumours stirring. We have given our lives to this job and it is being taken away." "Biscuits" Palmer, scion of the lemon puff dynasty, adds: "It might be worth taking this to the European Court."

JASPER GERARD

'Fifty grams of five-cent rice, Fifty grams of banoffee treacle, That's the way the euro goes, Pop goes the weasel'

The changeover plan for the euro should affect not merely the wide boys in yellow braces in the City, and manufacturers of slot-machines and insolent holes-in-the-wall that spit back plastic at us. The Government has allocated millions in order to prepare for this (hypothetical, do not panic) monetary change.

But it has not yet thought through the literary and linguistic consequences of getting rid of the pound. And it should, as a matter (as pontificators pomp it) of urgency. So who better than Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, to set up a quango, partly funded by National Lottery dosh, to prepare English language and literature for the momentous death of the pound sterling, avoidropids and of other homonymous sorts?

Otherwise, schoolchildren a century from now may miss the

point of Shylock's pound of flesh, first taken *literatim* by him and then *verbatim* by Portia, trumping him. They will, no doubt, still find Shylock the giant character of that play, blotting out Antonio and those other Venetian yuppies as majestically as Macbeth and his Dragon Queen blot out the other assorted Scots in their play. (Methinks the Lady doth writhe and grope and calculate arithmetic too much in her nightie in the current production in Shaftesbury Avenue.) To have Shylock insisting on his bond of 0.45359 kilograms of flesh will not fit into an iambic pentameter. So scholars must devise a version that preserves the measure without losing the metre.

Similarly urgent work is needed on other literary references to the pound which are about to become obsolete and unintelligible. I suppose that we could keep both currencies current by

amending the spell to: "When I was one-and-twenty/ I heard a wise man say: Give crowns and pounds and guineas! But not euros away." This may lose a romantic point. But it makes a new one, undreamt of by Housman: that money can't buy you friends in the EU: it can only rent them.

The enigmatic nursery rhyme can be rewritten without undue difficulty as, "Fifty grams of five-cent rice, Fifty grams of banoffee treacle, That's the way the euro goes, Pop goes the weasel." The references are said to be to a pub and music-hall in the City Road, to pawing a tailor's iron, and then to Another Newspaper. Bosh. As so often in children's rhymes, there are

hints of an erotic dance.

But the pound has permeated far more than literature. It is the oldest prehistoric Germanic adoption from Latin, where it was a word for weight not cash. In the Dark Ages a pound or *libra* of Roman silver became a measure of money as our pound, German *pfund*, and so on throughout Teutonic languages. It was made up of 100 starting coins or pennies, which had a star (*steorra*) in Old English embossed upon them.

The point of money is not in its possession or its name, but in its use. There is nothing sacrosanct about our naff pound coin, which slip so easily through the holes in the Puffa pocket to the

floor of George's car. The last beautiful coins that the Royal Mint struck were the Victorian guinea, with St George sataying the dragon on its reverse, behind the Queen Empress, Victoria's ship halfpenny, and the farthing with a robin on its back.

Surely we can design more attractive euro coinage than our present tinkling symbols? But rewriting the language to replace pounds will be harder. "You don't get many of those to the pound" is an ancient sexist remark shared by males as a particularly well-developed pair of female breasts passes by. It has spread all over the English-speaking world without any evident process of communication. It is probably a sibling scribbling to Kiddy was "ere, which goes back to *Marcus fuit hic*.

We shall have task forces

substituting euros and cents for pounds and pence in hundreds of such tags as "It's a pound to a pinch of something unpleasant beginning with sh-", and the old Cockney jocularities. "Given away with a pound of tea", as in "Mum's hat looks as if it was given away with a pound of tea". I know not what we can do about Ezra Pound, who failed to impress Gertrude Stein. She said he was a village explainer. Excellent if you were not, not. Our euro conversion linguists will have to bear in mind that there are three separate homonyms in pound: an enclosure or pen, the unit of weight, and to pound or bruise, as with a pestle. They must ponder their imponderable and ponderous cognates, from pension to pond. And we must remember that pound or urine, money is of no use to man or beast until we part with it.

Philip Howard





THE KINGMAKER'S HEAD

Lafontaine is gone, but unlikely to be a quiet ghost

Yesterday Oskar Lafontaine stunned all Germany by resigning as Finance Minister and leader of the Social Democrats. But the critical moment, it appears, was during a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday when Gerhard Schröder, the German Chancellor, read the riot act to his Red-Green coalition, singling out as a "strategic error" the botched tax changes imposed by Red Oskar and his radical Green allies on German business. The result was that Lafontaine walked out. But it is a measure of the reputation for indecision that the Chancellor has deservedly acquired that it was he, not Herr Lafontaine, whom the Bonn rumour mongers had expected to fall on his sword. The story is not over yet.

This is no mere quarrel between prime minister and chancellor, of the kind familiar in British politics. Herr Schröder would never have had the chance to run for the Chancellorship had Herr Lafontaine not permitted it. The king has forced out the kingmaker: and it is still the kingmaker who has the deeper claims on the loyalty of German socialists. Did Herr Schröder do the deed by mistake, as his "surprise" would suggest? This would be a drama in any political context. In modern Germany, where political fratricide is unthinkable, the consequences for the governing coalition, and for the Chancellor himself, are impossible to predict.

Herr Schröder now belatedly assumes the seat at the head of the table which his rival had, conspicuously, usurped; but Herr Lafontaine, whose political ambitions must be assumed to be undimmed, will be the most unlikely ghost since Banquo. Voters may see not strength in their Chancellor but further proof of weakness; for Herr Schröder would not have had to get rid of his Finance Minister had he been capable of controlling him. Unless he now puts a firm stop to the bickering which has been his Government's most obvious

characteristic and reveals clear ideas of his own about German policy — of which there has so far been precious little evidence — this will look like the desperation of a drowning man. The timing, just before the critical EU summit this month, is so bad that there is no way that this can be presented as a premeditated decision.

Yet, provided that chaos has a time-limit and that the Chancellor is not such a fool as to seek honourable exile for Herr Lafontaine as the next President of the European Commission, this is good news for both Germany and Europe. First, it offers some hope of a saner German economic policy. However inchoate the Chancellor's "new middle" may be, it cannot but be an improvement on Herr Lafontaine's ruinous assault on the profitability of German business and his reckless backing for the unaffordable wage demands pressed by the country's powerful unions. The way could even be open to woo the small, liberal Free Democrat Party into the coalition, on a platform of structural reforms to taxes, pensions and rigid labour laws. All these things Germany desperately needs, if it is to act as a stimulus rather than a drag on Europe's prospects for growth.

Secondly, the European Central Bank should find it easier to cut interest rates. Herr Lafontaine's loud demands have made it difficult previously to do so without risk to its reputation for sound money.

Tony Blair should not, however, assume that Germany will now be a convert to his liberalising agenda for the EU. On tax harmonisation and other measures to stamp out what Germans call "social dumping" and economists call comparative advantage, Herr Lafontaine differs from his colleagues only in his readiness to be brutally frank. Herr Schröder is equally convinced that the euro must lead to political union. He just says so in a softer voice and with a more winning smile.

THE CAP STILL GROWS

A farm deal that makes mockery of reform

Any negotiation that ends just before dawn tends to be hailed by the weary negotiators as an historic breakthrough. Daylight brings truth. So it is with the bargain struck yesterday by European Union agriculture ministers on "reforming" the common agricultural policy. Its best claim to historic status is that, even by the low standards of EU negotiation, it represents an unusually complete triumph of sectoral special pleading over economic realism and sound policy.

By all the yardsticks which this negotiation had to satisfy it falls well short. The deal will not solve the EU's immediate budgetary problems, let alone meet the challenges of EU enlargement. It will not help the farmers who most need support, or free those who are able to compete on open markets from the restrictive lunacies of price-fixing or production quotas. It in no way fits the EU, the world's second largest exporter and biggest importer of farm produce, for the next round of global trade negotiations. And rather than cut the cost of a system that already absorbs half of all spending by Brussels, as the last EU summit had instructed farm ministers to do, it adds a further £680 million to the £3.7 billion the Commission's original proposals would already have added to the 2000-06 CAP budget.

The final decision on this deal, a crucial component of what is supposed to be a far-reaching overhaul of EU finances to make room for new members, rests with heads of government. There is a strong possibility that it will unravel well before the start of the EU summit on March 24. It deserves to do so, although there is no guarantee that further haggling will produce improvements. Presented with Commission proposals that were already well short of what is required for real

reform, the farm ministers have either postponed "difficult" decisions, such as abolishing the dairy quotas that artificially prevent British farmers from meeting domestic demand, or taken decisions that are blatantly retrograde. A 30 per cent cut in guaranteed beef payments, for example, was the absolute minimum required to avoid a return to the beef mountains for which the EU was notorious in the past. Instead, it will be 20 per cent; and it is the same story with grains. Steeper cuts were, and are, indispensable.

Even more disappointing is the rejection of the few proposals which could be classed as structural reforms rather than mere tinkering. The first would have required national governments, rather than EU central funds, to bear part of the cost of compensating farmers for cuts in guaranteed prices. Only when taxpayers see that each failure to cut the costs of the CAP has a direct impact on spending on other national priorities will there be serious political pressure to change the system. This was stopped by France — proving that Germany will still, when it comes to the crunch, put the Franco-German marriage ahead of the common EU interest.

The second was the Commission's plan to concentrate direct financial assistance on poorer farmers, while setting a ceiling on compensation payments to those perfectly able to prosper without public subsidy. The ceiling was lofty: it would have scaled down payments after the first £70,000. This time, it was Britain which blocked the way, to protect its most efficient big farms some of which stand to receive a wholly indefensible £700,000 a year. Tony Blair claims to be dissatisfied with this miserable piece of cobbling. But a fresh start is impossible unless he admits Britain's share of the blame and alters course.

BATTLE OF THE DINNER PLATE

The Prince enjoys the hospitality of Uruguay

Putting his best foot forward, the Prince of Wales lugged his way on to front pages all over the country yesterday. He could be forgiven for being a little less thrusting as he proceeds across the borders into Uruguay. British envoys have not always found there the hospitality they might have expected. Some of them still recall how Sir Geoffrey Jackson, the late British Ambassador in Montevideo, was captured by a guerrilla group, imprisoned in damp dungeons and had to pass several months in stoical isolation before persuading his captors to set him free.

These mere diplomatic infelicities may now be history. But the course of Latin American politics flows, as ever, more swiftly than the smooth River Plate by which that great World War II naval battle was fought. After 11 years of ill-tempered military rule, Uruguay returned to civilian government in 1985. The current head of state, President Sanguinetti, presides over what is indeed a sanguine democracy. The days when this pocket-sized nation was known as the Switzerland of South America are long gone. But the quality of life in Uruguay is still far better than that of most other countries in the continent.

In the language of the native Charrua Indians, Uruguay means "river of the painted birds". Parakeets screech through

plantations, bright painted waterfowl paddle lagoons. These have become one of the tourist attractions of an unassuming nation which emerges from reticence once every four years when minds wander to the subject of past World Cup winners.

Uruguay gained the world championship twice, and though that was long ago — in 1930 and 1950 — it remains remarkable that so small a nation should have raised such teams. Just three million people inhabit a country the size of England and Wales, with well over half of them in the slow, time-warped capital of Montevideo.

The only conflict, then, that Prince Charles is likely to face in this now peaceful and courteous country is the battle of the dinner plate. In the land where Fray Bentos is a town not a tin, where the cattle which graze the sprawling pastures outnumber the inhabitants three to one, meat is a mainstay. Steaks, each the size of a decent principality, are set sizzling on grills. A good local parrillada washed down with regional wine makes a feast fit for a monarch — and his retinue. As Prince Charles tucks in, a nation may take pride that this is not the first time it has served the British well. Some of his countrymen still think fondly of the tins of meat from Uruguay which fuelled the Allies through the century's hungrier years.

Budget impact on social inequality

From Mr David de Gale

Sir, There is an important distinction between "stealth taxes" and "tax increases" (Anatole Kaletsky's article, March 11). The latter have to be paid; the former are, to some extent, voluntary. One can smoke or drink less, or not at all; a small car will make up for the higher cost of petrol.

"Modestly higher taxes" are needed, as Mr Kaletsky accepts, to re-balance national expenditure to the advantage of the young (education), the old (pensions/health) and small businesses. To achieve this, even on a partially voluntary basis, is a remarkable accomplishment.

This Budget is a confirmation for those of us who reluctantly voted against the Conservative Government in the belief that a change was necessary to alleviate serious social imbalances.

If Mr Hague takes note of this, then he may yet become Prime Minister. But, to judge by the uniform howls against the Chancellor by your correspondents today, he has a very hard task ahead.

Yours etc,
DAVID DE GALE,
Dernford Barn,
Saxmundham, IP17 2BQ
March 11.

From the Director of the Catholic Housing Aid Society

Sir, This society welcomes the Chancellor's decision to phase out mortgage interest tax relief, which has distorted the housing market and subsidised the better off. However, instead of funding a tax reduction, we believe the money saved should be used to prevent homelessness among low-income homeowners.

Unlike those who rent their home, homeowners on low incomes are ineligible for help until six to nine months after losing their job. As a result many experience arrears, repossession and homelessness.

As a step towards helping the 30,000 families who face losing their homes this year, Miras savings should be recycled back into housing to help prevent homelessness, regardless of whether people rent or buy, through an integrated housing benefit.

Yours sincerely,
ROBINA RAFFERTY,
Director, CHAS,
209 Old Marylebone Road, NW1 5QT,
March 11.

From Mr Les Holley

Sir, I should like to congratulate the Chancellor on an excellent Budget. People such as myself on a low income will begin to feel that working is worthwhile at last.

Yours faithfully,
L. HOLLEY,
23a West Street,
Harrow on the Hill,
Middlesex HA1 3ED,
March 10.

From Mr Mark McArthur-Christie

Sir, Drivers will be much poorer after the Budget, with another 6 per cent hike in the price of fuel. Is this just the start of a Labour campaign to force them off the roads into poorly funded and inadequate public transport? The freedoms brought by the car are increasingly being ignored and drivers made to feel guilty.

Car taxes should be ring-fenced and spent on improving the road network. The Association of British Drivers is launching a campaign for fair taxation: isn't it time drivers were listened to?

Yours faithfully,
MARK MCARTHUR-CHRISTIE
(Roads and traffic spokesman),
The Association of British Drivers,
PO Box 1608, London SE19 2ZW,
March 10.

From Mr Gavin R. Dobson

Sir, Why is it that perfectly legitimate activities are sanctimoniously tainted as "loopholes", that must then be "closed" after which they must be "taxed"?

I am getting uneasy about the enveloping mist of fiscal correctness coming from our controllers.

Yours faithfully,
GAVIN R. DOBSON,
The Blair, Blairlogie,
Stirlingshire FK9 5PX,
March 11.

Hague's future

From Mr N. J. D. Baptiste

Sir, Tim Haines claims (article, March 4) that it is likely that the biggest impact of this year's local authority elections will be on the standing of William Hague. The electorate, however, has already given its verdict: in 638 local council by-elections since the last general election the Conservatives had 80 net gains, Labour 68 net losses, with the Liberal Democrats breaking even.

Yours faithfully,
N. J. D. BAPTISTE,
22 The Orchard, Milford-on-Sea,
Lymington, Hampshire SO41 0SR,
March 4.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

America's use of its global power

From Mr Mark R. Harrington

Sir, Libby Purves has written an informative article regarding the banana "crisis" ("This harvest of greed", March 9; see also letters, March 5, 8 and 10). However, I believe her labelling of the United States of America as a "bully" ignores the reality of the United States' genuine role in international affairs.

Allow me to state what I deduce is an extremely common viewpoint here across the pond. Beginning with the Marshall Plan, the people of the US have demonstrated for over 50 years their generosity and commitment to assisting peoples economically around the globe. Even during the most difficult economic spells the US has remained the world's largest donor of money to developing economies as well to the economies of those recovering from natural and other disasters.

Is it wrong, therefore, to expect our largesse to be rewarded from time to time with more than a mere thank you? If we are to provide the cash — be it to Europe, the Middle East, Africa, or wherever — we will, and do, expect to have a voice in certain economic

decisions. Nations who do not wish to see the US in this role should not accept any US dollars. We are all free to cut off our noses to spite our faces.

Quite frankly, many Americans are fed up with receiving nothing but insults whenever our domestic economic interests conflict with our global economic interests.

Respectfully,
MARK R. HARRINGTON,
3443 Mohanna Street,
Apartment 2204,
Dallas, Texas 75209,
mark8plus@aol.com
March 10.

From Mr Christopher D. Kent

Sir, Having read Libby Purves's article, I am ashamed, as an American, by my country's actions in the so-called banana war.

Now that the US is the world's only "superpower", we are becoming increasingly crass, amoral and — I'm afraid — truly imperialistic.

Yours sincerely,
CHRISTOPHER D. KENT,
PO Box 739,
Westbrook, Connecticut 06498,
March 9.

Trade disputes with US

From Mr Richard Branson

Sir, I have been following the dispute between the US and the EU about bananas with interest (letters, March 5, 8 and 10). I cannot help comparing the US Government's claim to moral high ground in this case with its apparent determination to maintain the moral low ground in aviation matters.

The US has a policy of discriminating against foreign airlines such as Virgin Atlantic in favour of its own carriers. The list includes the "fly America" policy, under which US civil servants or anyone with a US Government contract is forced to use US airlines; restrictions on leasing aircraft to US carriers; attempts to ban gambling on foreign aircraft in international airspace in contravention of international treaty.

This is against a background of repeated US protestations about the benefits of competition and criticisms of the UK for refusing to cave in and

accept a new bilateral aviation agreement, which I believe is hopelessly biased towards US airlines.

The UK Government is absolutely right to resist US bullying tactics. Whether it is also right not to react to US discrimination against UK carriers is more of a moot point. UK civil servants can use US airlines: the latter can bid for Ministry of Defence travel contracts; US aircraft are extensively leased to European companies. The loss of income for UK airlines is considerable.

Perhaps it is time the Government was more forceful regarding blatant discrimination against UK companies. The US authorities might then realise that they cannot preach the benefits of free trade only when it suits them.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD BRANSON
(Chairman),
Virgin Atlantic Airways
11 Holland Park, W11 3TH,
March 10.

Pontius Pilate

From Mr P. M. Burrows

Sir, If Pontius Pilate was the harsh, illiberal ruler described by Jewish sources ("Pontius Pilate the truth", Weekend, March 6; letters, March 10), why was he so fair-minded towards Jesus?

The answer must be that after being led by the chief priests to expect a Che Guevara he was nonplussed to find himself confronted with a Mahatma Gandhi.

Yours sincerely,
P. M. BURROWS
(Author, *Goat of Doubt*, 1998),
41 Harrison Close,
Reigate, Surrey RH2 7HS,
March 6.

From Mrs Janet Todd

Sir, Though the truth is far from certain, Peter Stothard has given us a valuable insight into the background of Christ's trial and crucifixion.

I believe that his article, illustrated with Jörg Breu the Elder's brilliant painting, will do more to remind people to go to church this Easter than a

hundred posters of Che Guevara. The fracas over the Churches' much-publicised poster (letters, January 11) has died down at the moment, but the controversy will be forced on our notice again if, despite an official complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority, it goes up on hoardings and church noticeboards before Easter.

Yours faithfully,
JANET TODD,
Foxton Lodge,
Foxton Close, Oxford OX2 8LB,
March 6.

From Mr Desmond Briggs

Sir, I have always relished the story of the 18th-century bishop in the Church of Ireland who decided to look through the Creed he recited daily in his chapel in order to determine how much of it he actually believed in. He was a rationalist, and ended up with "I believe in . . . Pontius Pilate".

Yours faithfully,
DESMOND BRIGGS,
Old Werretts, Castle Combe,
Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 7HH,
March 10.

The Emir of Bahrain

From Sir Roger Tomkys, Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge

Sir, May I add a footnote to your obituary of the Emir of Bahrain (March 8)?

You emphasised modern Bahrain's dependence upon Saudi Arabia and the United States. But today's Bahrain was built upon decades of co-operation with Britain which brought education, employment and prosperity to a tiny Emirate with very limited oil or other resources.

Sheikh Isa, like his father and grandfather, made the British welcome, and counted other expatriates by extension as inviting almost equal treatment. This friendship was not without cost: geography and history, with or without the causeway linking the two countries, made Bahrain dependent on Saudi Arabia; but in an era of Moslem/Christian stress, Chris-

tian worship in Bahrain remained free and open with Sheikh Isa's support and he sent packing, despite his country's vulnerability, any neighbouring religious zealots who pressed him to follow the policies of the mainland.

Sheikh Isa was instinctively supportive of British policies and a great admirer of the Royal Family. In Bahrain's domestic affairs he was a gifted conciliator.

The succession and country are in good hands, but Britain and the British people have lost an especially warm and sincere friend, and many of us feel deep personal sorrow at his death.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER TOMKYS
(Ambassador to Bahrain, 1981-84),
Pembroke College,
Cambridge CB2 3RF,
master@pemb.cam.ac.uk
March 8.

Gainsborough portrait

From Mr M. J. Michell

Sir, I share the regret of other Marlburians at the reported plan of Marlborough College to sell Henry Hony's great gift of the Gainsborough portrait (details and photograph, March 8).

That I have any appreciation of painting owes much to this picture. Your photograph cannot convey the overwhelming brightness and splendour of its impression on a schoolboy, nor the sense of being in the presence of a piece of work that is of the best in its field. That, I suggest, is worth just as much to the education of the next generation as a swimming pool or "arts centre".

I also remember Henry Hony as a benefactor of great kindness to many boys as well as to the college. I believe

his gift was a very particular one, not intended to be convertible into alternative assets at will.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MICHELL
(Marlborough College, 1956-60),
61 Sunderland Road,
London SE23 2PS,
March 8.

From Mrs Elisabeth J. Bartlett

Sir, I am concerned about the wider effect of Marlborough College's attempt to sell its Gainsborough.

Who will want to give donations like this to deserving institutions in future? What better way to make such donations simply stop?

Yours faithfully,
ELISABETH BARTLETT,
119 Burbage Road, SE21 7AF,
March 9.

Reality of right to roam 'gamble'

From the Chairman of The Moorland Association

Sir, So now we know. The moors — along with other areas — are to be "opened up" (report and leading article, March 9). But what will the reality be? Interference with management; disturbance taking its toll on wildlife, with numbers diminishing; bureaucrats having a field day; lawyers prospering; the public confused; the countryside littered with direction and temporary closure signs.

The Government is taking a high-risk gamble with the future of our unique upland heritage. The pity is that it could all have been done peacefully and in a spirit of true British compromise.

For the last ten years, members of this Association have volunteered to establish a locally agreed system of access with sufficient paths and open areas throughout moorland in England and Wales.

Instead we now face a future full of complexity, uncertainty and potential antagonism, coupled with an expensive administrative nightmare for everyone.

Yours sincerely,
A. MILBANK, Chairman,
The Moorland Association,
16 Castle Park, Lancaster LA1 1YG.

From Dr A. P. O'Connor

Sir, My wife and I were amused to hear that a great breakthrough has been achieved in opening up the countryside to ramblers.

We have walked the Oxfordshire countryside for 15 years and have long noticed that the throngs of ramblers then out 400 yards from any car park or road. Where are the rambling hordes waiting to fill the countryside?

Yours faithfully,
A. P. O'CONNOR,
2 Castle End,
Deddington, Oxfordshire OX15 0TE.

From Mr R. C. Millar

Sir, You report that the Country Landowners Association believes the proposed legislation on right to roam "has destroyed the goodwill of the countryside".

What goodwill was that?
Regards,
R. C. MILLAR,
25 Boulton Court,
Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 8TH,
March 9.

Seeing the light

From Professor R. A. Weale

Sir, Your timely report (March 9) on research into the psychological benefits of working in natural as opposed to artificial light shows that there is nothing new under the sun.

When, in the 1960s, consideration was being given to the construction of windowless commercial buildings, because windows were expensive given the building methods then prevalent, ambient artificial light also received much attention.

It was thought that its uncomfortable aspect was due less to its artificiality than to its constancy. Artificial light began to be looked on as an amenity that could be variable, much as daylight. The hype in energy costs in the 1970s stopped all that.

It would seem that those concerned with the problems you mention might like to take a new look at varying internal environments. Variable dimmers, controlled by random programs, might help to achieve an environment in which time moves faster than it seems in steady illumination.

Yours very truly,
ROBERT WEALE,
as from: The Athenaeum,
Pall Mall, SW1Y 5ER,
March 10.

Women priests

From the Reverend John Papworth

Sir, Why all this fuss about women priests (letters, March 4 and 9)? With the house on fire have people no other preoccupations than to worry about the gender of the fire brigade?

With respect,
JOHN PAPWORTH
(Editor), *Fourth World Review*,
24 Abercorn Place, NW8 9XP,
March 9.

News at 6.30

From Mr Mycal Miller

Sir, ITN are to be congratulated for ringing in the changes, but it seems odd to have "bongs" on the half-hour. Has someone dropped a clanger?

Yours faithfully,
MYCAL MILLER,
8 Homestead Park, NW2 6JB,
March 9.

Increased incentive?

From Mr John O'Byrne

Sir, Would a National No Smoking Month offer more encouragement to those who want to give up the habit for good (report, March 11)?

Yours truly,
JOHN O'BYRNE,
2 Mount Argus Court,
Harold's Cross, Dublin 6W,
March 11.

OBITUARIES

SIDNEY GOTTLIEB

Sidney Gottlieb, CIA scientist, died on March 7 aged 80. He was born on August 3, 1918.

When Churchill spoke of a world "made darker by the dark lights of perverted science" he was referring to the revolting experiments conducted on human beings by Nazi doctors in the concentration camps. But his remarks might with equal justice have been applied to the activities of the CIA's Sidney Gottlieb, who used LSD and other mind-controlling drugs on a host of unwitting subjects in the quest for a formula for winning the Cold War without recourse to arms.

Over a period of twenty years from the 1950s to the 1970s mental patients, prisoners, drug addicts, prostitutes, the clients of prostitutes and even the agency's own employees were unwittingly experimented on with drugs. At least

one "participant" in these tests died. Others went insane or suffered other forms of irreversible psychological damage. Indeed, what Gottlieb and his CIA henchmen did was only in degree different from the activities which had sent a number of Nazi scientists to the gallows at Nuremberg in 1946.

The ghastliness of the CIA experiment is, perhaps, mitigated only by the fact that in the end it rebounded on the agency and its paranoid leadership. For by introducing America to lysergic acid diethylamide as one of the main planks of his programme, Gottlieb created the LSD generation: quietist, pacifist, anti-authoritarian and, above all, violently anti-Vietnam War. And the supreme irony of his programme was that the American armies which fought that conflict were in a substantial degree undermined by the very drugs with which Gottlieb had intended to brainwash America's ene-

mies and break their morale. As the Russians were to discover a generation later in Afghanistan, it is a characteristic of "no-win" wars fought for dubious ideological aims that they tend to expose young soldiers to drug abuse as an escape from the horrors of their situation.

The mind-altering drugs, which also included marijuana and mescal, were never in fact used to any effect against important Soviet targets. And at his retirement in 1972 Gottlieb was to dismiss his entire effort for the CIA as "useless".

However, drugs were not Gottlieb's only weapon against the CIA's enemies. He was also involved in assassination plots which at this distance read like something out of a Jacobean revenge play. Thus, there was to be a poisoned handkerchief to kill the Iraqi military dictator, General Kassir. Toxic gifts were to be offered to the Cuban leader, Fidel Castro.



Gottlieb in 1977 after he had retired from the CIA

An assassination kit, complete with needles, rubber gloves, gauze masks and lethal biological materials, was designed to make away with Congo's Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba. None of these plots achieved its aim: the Congolese opposition to Lumumba killed him before the agency could execute its plan.

Another imaginative idea masterminded by Gottlieb was a series of CIA brothels, set up in San Francisco in the 1960s and operated for eight years. The idea was that a cross-section of the American people from all social levels might be lured into these houses where prostitutes would slip them drugs, after

which, through two-way mirrors, CIA agents would observe their behaviour. Decor and mood were created with scrupulous care. Bedrooms had sultry crimson soft furnishings and their walls were tastefully adorned with reproductions of Toulouse Lautrec paintings and posters. But although hundreds of unsuspecting punters were drugged during this period it was never at all clear what benefit to American security was yielded by this fantastic and voyeuristic idea.

Gottlieb was the son of Jewish immigrants from Hungary. He himself was to turn with almost every religion. He took a degree in chemistry at the University of Wisconsin and a doctorate in biochemistry at the California Institute of Technology. A club foot kept him out of the war but he got his chance to serve his country in 1951 when he joined the CIA.

Within two years he was made head of the CIA's technical services division and put in charge of the newly-established department MKUltra. Its remit was to develop mind-controlling drugs for use against the Soviet bloc.

Gottlieb discovered LSD early on. Apart from administering it to others he was an enthusiastic recreational user himself, going on hundreds of acid "trips" during his years with the CIA. After his retirement from the agency he was awarded the Distinguished Intelligence Medal for his patriotic services — but the CIA was careful to destroy most of the records of the work MKUltra had done.

Nevertheless, in the mid-1970s his name emerged into the public domain when he was asked to testify before a Senate committee which was investigating the extent of the CIA's secret experiments. Although his appeal to the committee to have his name taken out of its report was granted, newspapers had already disclosed his identity.

Subsequently John D. Marks's book *The Search for the 'Manchurian Candidate': The CIA and Mind Control* (1979), gave a full account of MKUltra's activities, coming to the simultaneous conclusions that Gottlieb was "unquestionably a patriot", but that his work "clearly violated the Nuremberg standards".

After retiring from the CIA, Gottlieb turned his back on his destructive past and devoted himself to healing. With his wife Margaret, who was a missionary's daughter, he ran a leprosy hospital in northern India for 18 months. On their return to the US the couple bought a small farm in northern Virginia, near the Blue Ridge Mountains. There they lived quietly, indulging themselves in their twin pastimes of folk dancing and goat herding. Later they had both worked in a hospice, tending the terminally ill.

Sidney Gottlieb is survived by Margaret, and by two sons and two daughters.

RAY BROCK

Ray Brock, MBE, wine-maker, chemist, businessman and racing driver, died on February 14 aged 91. He was born on August 19, 1907.

RAY BROCK was a research chemist who helped in the development of colour film, one of the fathers of the modern British wine industry, and a man with a passion for speed. He brought irrepressible energy to all his enterprises, some of it anarchically misdirected.

Raymond Barrington Brock was educated at Eastbourne College and London University, where he took a degree in chemistry and physics. In recognition of his various research projects, he was later made a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chemistry.

Between the wars his love affair with speed and things mechanical was nurtured by racing motorcycles at Brooklands. He was also offered the use of a works Lewis to ride in the Ulster TT. He was not sure how to get it to Northern Ireland until his cousin offered the use of his Delage car. The two of them then managed to strap the Lewis to the front mudguard, and despite raised police eyebrows they drove all the way, peering through the windscreen over the bike.

During the General Strike he drove a London bus, and in 1931 he won himself flying lessons as first prize in a competition run by *Tatler*. He duly qualified as a private pilot in 1932. He also shot at Bisley,



Ray Brock in unusually stately mode, driving the Cannstadt Daimler at Beaulieu

and commuted at Brooklands, Crystal Palace and Donington. In what time he could spare to get to his hobbies, he worked as a research chemist in the photographic industry, with the Imperial Dry Plate Company, Ilford Photographic and Dufaycolour.

During the war he was Chief Air Raid Warden for the City of London, for which he was appointed MBE and made a Freeman of the City. But living in Croydon during the Blitz proved dangerous, and when Brock and his wife lost the roof of their house in 1941, they moved to Oxford.

Missing the delights of imported fruits during rationing, Brock decided to try growing peaches (against purpose-built walls) and table grapes (under special glass cloches which he helped to develop). Investigating vine varieties, he discovered several that were suitable only for wine, so he planted a wine vineyard and appealed to the Royal Horticultural Society members to send him cuttings. He also sought varieties from France and Germany, just months after the war.

As his meticulous garden diaries show, the first experimental vines were planted out

in March 1946 and, aided by a full-time gardener, Brock established what was initially called the Beebrook Vineyard and later became the Oxford Viticultural Research Station. For almost 30 years and at his own expense, he worked at this, almost inadvertently laying the foundations for what is now a 2,250-acre industry.

More than 600 different cultivars of vines were given trials for suitability; accurate records were kept of the sugar and acid levels and the ripening dates achieved, and this data was assembled and published in four little books. On a

strictly non-commercial basis, he also made wines — red and white, still and sparkling — and in later years experimented with distillation, producing extremely palatable brandy.

Together with *The Grape Vine in England* by Edward Hyams, Brock's booklets prompted Major-General Sir Guy Salisbury-Jones to plant the first modern British vineyard at Hambledon in 1951. This was followed by Jack Ward's Horem Manor vineyard in 1953 (using cuttings from Oxford and Gore-Browne's Beaulieu in 1958). These became the backbone of the fledgling English wine industry.

Brock was by now a director of Townson & Mercer Ltd, a firm of scientific instrument makers, and he became president of the Scientific Instrument Makers Association in 1957. But he was also involved in motor racing in the early postwar period, holding the lap record at Croftwood for a sports car of up to two litres in 1948. He twice drove an HRG sports car in the Spa 24-hours race, and having designed and built his own streamlined body for the car, he was third in his class in 1948 and second in 1949.

Brock subsequently abandoned track racing for Swiss hill-climbs, firstly in a special Healey, again designed and built by himself, and then in a works Jowett Javelin. This inspired him to build a complete car to his own design, with a Javelin engine which was to be capable of 100 mph and 50 mpg. The resulting rear-engine coupe was extremely advanced for the time.

At the age of 50 he tried the Cresta run and was co-opted into the British bobsleigh team as brakeman, but he lost his enthusiasm for that abruptly when they had a bad crash and he broke several ribs. He also took up yachting, designing a number of fittings, particularly related to the engine for the yachts he acquired. He went on to design and construct a steam launch, *Silencia*, on which he often took friends of all ages for Sunday picnics. Being somewhat jerry-built, the vessel's fuel pipe was wont to burst, at which Brock would produce a dispassionate handkerchief and swat out the flames.

His later business interests included owning a colour printing works, a Renault franchise and a computer firm, when computers were still in their infancy. He maintained his interest in cars into his eighties, and was instrumental in the re-commissioning of the National Motor Museum's 1938 Cannstadt Daimler. Subsequently, "to keep my mind active", he hoped to restore a number of classic vehicles. His last venture, still to be completed, is a steam cycle car.

He married Rosemary Spicer in 1933, and she survives him. There are no children.

TOM BAISTOW

Tom Baistow, journalist, died on March 8 aged 84. He was born on July 13, 1914.

TOM BAISTOW was an all-round journalist of the old school. For more than a decade he was deputy editor of the *New Statesman*, but that was merely the culmination of a long and varied newspaper career.

Enoch Thomas Baistow was born in Glasgow and educated in his native Scotland, though part of his childhood was spent in western Canada. He left school at the age of 14 to become a copyboy on the *Scottish Daily Express*, where his father worked as a compositor. Resolving early on that he wanted to be on the editorial side of the paper, he started writing captions for photographs, subbing "shots" and making himself generally useful in the newsroom. By the age of 17 he had moved to Manchester to become the "splash sub" on the old *Daily Sketch* and a few years later he transferred to the *New Chronicle* as its northern picture editor.

In the war he was commissioned into the Royal Tank Regiment, seeing action as a tank commander in North Africa, Normandy (where he landed on D-Day), Belgium, Holland and Germany. Though he returned to his old job on the *New Chronicle* in Manchester, he was restive at first and thought of emigrating to Israel, where his wife, whom he had married in 1938, had family connections. Instead, however, he accepted a job as deputy features editor of the *New Chronicle* at its London headquarters in Bouverie Street.

He spent the next dozen years on that paper, being successively features editor and then foreign editor, abandoning ship only when the *New Chronicle* was scuttled

by the Cadbury family in October 1960. He was father of the journalists' chapel at the time and fought hard to secure the best deal he could for all those who were thrown out of work so abruptly (the paper was still selling a million copies a day at the time it was closed down along with its stablemate, the London evening paper, the *Star*).

Baistow had many close friends in Bouverie Street, including the columnist James Cameron, the diplomatic correspondent William Forrest, and, perhaps above all, the cartoonist, Vicky, who killed himself in 1966.



Throughout his career Baistow had shopped on the left-hand side of the street, so it was appropriate that his enforced next move was to the old TUC paper, the *Daily Herald*, where he became a special feature writer. In 1964 the *Herald* was transfigured into the *Hugh Cudlipp Sun*, and as an old-fashioned socialist (indeed, in the 1930s, an undercover member of the Communist Party), Baistow never felt entirely at home on the only paper to be "born in the age in which we live".

Accordingly, in 1965 he accepted with alacrity an invitation from Paul Johnson to join the staff of the *New Statesman*, which was then selling more than 90,000 copies a week and at the peak of its circulation success. Very soon he was appointed deputy editor and, in production terms, became the kingpin of the entire enterprise. He also wrote a highly respected press column of his own late first under the pseudonym Magnus Turnstile. He was a neat writer, and it was perhaps a pity that his preoccupation each week with bringing the paper out meant that only occasionally did he get the chance of deploying his literary talents to the full.

He worked at the *Statesman* for three successive editors, Paul Johnson, Richard Crossman and Anthony Howard, and served as acting editor for substantial periods when the first two were absent through ill-health. He never tried to become editor himself, being content with the role of sage counsellor.

He left in 1976, taking a job as press officer (and part-time lecturer) at the new School of Journalism at City University, as well as writing a press commentary for *The Guardian* and broadcasting frequently, notably on BBC. In 1985 he produced an excellent and concise guide to modern newspaper history entitled *Fourth-Rate Estates*, and from his favourite vantage point at the Saville Club he never lost his interest in what was going on in the world of communications.

For all his left-wing leanings he had a highly pragmatic streak, which led to his placating his Orpington home with Labour posters during at least three general elections before going off quietly to vote Liberal as the only effective way to keep out the Tory. To his younger, more romantic colleagues, he was never anything but a shrewd exemplar of commonsense.

He leaves his widow, Mae, to whom he had been married for 60 years, and their son and daughter.

CECIL MORLEY

Cecil Morley, CBE, former Secretary-General of the Stock Exchange, died on February 14 aged 87. He was born on May 20, 1911.

WHEN Cecil Morley joined the Stock Exchange, its role was simply to enable investors to buy or sell shares and companies to raise capital. The value of an investment depended on the rate of return and security of the capital, but the process of investment was slow.

As a result, new procedures were adopted to produce quick settlements, an effect of which is that today's violent fluctuations in prices show little relation to investment value. Morley felt that he had spent 22 years refitting the Ark.

Cecil Denis Morley was born in Pembrokehire. He was educated at Clifton College and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he read law, and in 1935 he qualified as a solicitor.

He then joined the staff of the Stock Exchange, assisting in the share and loan department, which was responsible for the admission of companies to the London market. In 1938 Morley joined the Territorial Army, and throughout the war he was employed on anti-aircraft operations, rising to the rank of major.

In 1949 he was appointed Secretary of the Stock Exchange, which was embarking on a modernisation programme. The first improve-

ment was in public relations and hospitality. The next step involved the creation of a compensation fund to protect clients. This in turn led to the supervision of member firms' accounts, and finally to the examination of candidates for membership. The first steps were also taken for the rebuilding of the Stock Exchange and for the settlement of dealings by mechanical means.

In all of these operations Morley was much engaged. He became Secretary-General of the Stock Exchange in 1965, and was appointed CBE in 1967. He retired in 1971.

In 1936 he married Lily Florence Young. She died in 1992, but he is survived by their son.

took off the entrance of the gulf of Mexico, the American brig *Canton*, bound to Liverpool, laden with 1,275 bags of cotton. In the same latitude it took the English brig *Jane*, from Savannah to Liverpool, with 700 bags of cotton.

In the course of its cruise it sunk a number of other ships of no value. This privateer was often chased by frigates and corvettes in different latitudes, and experienced five storms. In the last, on the 5th of February, it was obliged to throw its guns overboard.

CHERBOURG, Feb 23
The English sloop *Trial*, of about 20 tons, today entered this port, captured by the privateers *Loup Marin* and *l'Esperier*. This vessel was in ballast.

LORIENT, Feb 23
An English prize, named the *Pelisses*, was wrecked on the 16th instant, on the coast of Belleisle; her lading consisted of cotton, peltry, Cambray wool, saffron, and ginseng. The greater part of her cargo is expected to be saved.

Thirteen French sailors on board the prize were saved, together with 3 English prisoners. The *Pelisses* was about 200 tons, and was on her voyage from Providence Island to London, when she was captured by the privateer *Rodeur* of Bordeaux.

FRENCH PAPERS

PARIS, March 5.
IT IS said, that on the occasion of the Empress's lying in, sums of money will be distributed to pay the child-bed expenses of poor parents, and to redeem effects pawned at the *Mont de Piete*. The acts of munificence of the same kind, ordered upon the announcing of the Empress's pregnancy, had for their object the relief of a great many poor inhabitants of Paris. Relief was administered at her house to 2,166, the child-bed expenses of 2,062 families were defrayed, the sums received by 14,401 debtors of the *Mont de Piete* were repaid, and the effects given in pawn have been restored to those who deposited them.

The small apartments looking into the Palace-courtyard of the Tuilleries, which were lately occupied by the Grand Marshal, have been united to the apartments of the Empress, and will be occupied by the infant on its birth, and by the persons attached to its service.

We are assured, that at the moment so impatiently expected by all the French, and which must crown their dearest wishes, the birth of a Prince will be announced by 101 discharges of cannon, and the birth of a girl by 21. These salutes will be repeated by the

ON THIS DAY

March 12, 1811

This column of assorted news from France was culled from the French papers, some of it several weeks old to judge by the datelines. The *Monts de Piete* were charitable pawnshops.

artillery of all the fortresses of France and all the ports, of the vessels in the roads, and all places abroad occupied by the armies...

The privateer the *Duke of Danzig*, which sailed from the river of Mainz on the 8th of October, 1810, entered it on the 26th of February. On the 26th of November it captured, in the Sombrero passage, the English brig *Ceres*, from Martinique, which was recaptured off the river of Bordeaux. On the 3rd of December it took, on the same station, the English brig *Bonetta*, from Guadeloupe, with colonial produce. It also

PERSONAL COLUMN

NANNIES & DOMESTIC

Experienced Nannies required. Nannies for all ages and countries. References given. Apply to Mrs. J. H. Smith, 101, 103, 105, 107, 109, 111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121, 123, 125, 127, 129, 131, 133, 135, 137, 139, 141, 143, 145, 147, 149, 151, 153, 155, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165, 167, 169, 171, 173, 175, 177, 179, 181, 183, 185, 187, 189, 191, 193, 195, 197, 199, 201, 203, 205, 207, 209, 211, 213, 215, 217, 219, 221, 223, 225, 227, 229, 231, 233, 235, 237, 239, 241, 243, 245, 247, 249, 251, 253, 255, 257, 259, 261, 263, 265, 267, 269, 271, 273, 275, 277, 279, 281, 283, 285, 287, 289, 291, 293, 295, 297, 299, 301, 303, 305, 307, 309, 311, 313, 315, 317, 319, 321, 323, 325, 327, 329, 331, 333, 335, 337, 339, 341, 343, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355, 357, 359, 361, 363, 365, 367, 369, 371, 373, 375, 377, 379, 381, 383, 385, 387, 389, 391, 393, 395, 397, 399, 401, 403, 405, 407, 409, 411, 413, 415, 417, 419, 421, 423, 425, 427, 429, 431, 433, 435, 437, 439, 441, 443, 445, 447, 449, 451, 453, 455, 457, 459, 461, 463, 465, 467, 469, 471, 473, 475, 477, 479, 481, 483, 485, 487, 489, 491, 493, 495, 497, 499, 501, 503, 505, 507, 509, 511, 513, 515, 517, 519, 521, 523, 525, 527, 529, 531, 533, 535, 537, 539, 541, 543, 545, 547, 549, 551, 553, 555, 557, 559, 561, 563, 565, 567, 569, 571, 573, 575, 577, 579, 581, 583, 585, 587, 589, 591, 593, 595, 597, 599, 601, 603, 605, 607, 609, 611, 613, 615, 617, 619, 621, 623, 625, 627, 629, 631, 633, 635, 637, 639, 641, 643, 645, 647, 649, 651, 653, 655, 657, 659, 661, 663, 665, 667, 669, 671, 673, 675, 677, 679, 681, 683, 685, 687, 689, 691, 693, 695, 697, 699, 701, 703, 705, 707, 709, 711, 713, 715, 717, 719, 721, 723, 725, 727, 729, 731, 733, 735, 737, 739, 741, 743, 745, 747, 749, 751, 753, 755, 757, 759, 761, 763, 765, 767, 769, 771, 773, 775, 777, 779, 781, 783, 785, 787, 789, 791, 793, 795, 797, 799, 801, 803, 805, 807, 809, 811, 813, 815, 817, 819, 821, 823, 825, 827, 829, 831, 833, 835, 837, 839, 841, 843, 845, 847, 849, 851, 853, 855, 857, 859, 861, 863, 865, 867, 869, 871, 873, 875, 877, 879, 881, 883, 885, 887, 889, 891, 893, 895, 897, 899, 901, 903, 905, 907, 909, 911, 913, 915, 917, 919, 921, 923, 925, 927, 929, 931, 933, 935, 937, 939, 941, 943, 945, 947, 949, 951, 953, 955, 957, 959, 961, 963, 965, 967, 969, 971, 973, 975, 977, 979, 981, 983, 985, 987, 989, 991, 993, 995, 997, 999, 1001, 1003, 1005, 1007, 1009, 1011, 1013, 1015, 1017, 1019, 1021, 1023, 1025, 1027, 1029, 1031, 1033, 1035, 1037, 1039, 1041, 1043, 1045, 1047, 1049, 1051, 1053, 1055, 1057, 1059, 1061, 1063, 1065, 1067, 1069, 1071, 1073, 1075, 1077, 1079, 1081, 1083, 1085, 1087, 1089, 1091, 1093, 1095, 1097, 1099, 1101, 1103, 1105, 1107, 1109, 1111, 1113, 1115, 1117, 1119, 1121, 1123, 1125, 1127, 1129, 1131, 1133, 1135, 1137, 1139, 1141, 1143, 1145, 1147, 1149, 1151, 1153, 1155, 1157, 1159, 1161, 1163, 1165, 1167, 1169, 1171, 1173, 1175, 1177, 1179, 1181, 1183, 1185, 1187, 1189, 1191, 1193, 1195, 1197, 1199, 1201, 1203, 1205, 1207, 1209, 1211, 1213, 1215, 1217, 1219, 1221, 1223, 1225, 1227, 1229, 1231, 1233, 1235, 1237, 1239, 1241, 1243, 1245, 1247, 1249, 1251, 1253, 1255, 1257, 1259, 1261, 1263, 1265, 1267, 1269, 1271, 1273, 1275, 1277, 1279, 1281, 1283, 1285, 1287, 1289, 1291, 1293, 1295, 1297, 1299, 1301, 1303, 1305, 1307, 1309, 1311, 1313, 1315, 1317, 1319, 1321, 1323, 1325, 1327, 1329, 1331, 1333, 1335, 1337, 1339, 1341, 1343, 1345, 1347, 1349, 1351, 1353, 1355, 1357, 1359, 1361, 1363, 1365, 1367, 1369, 1371, 1373, 1375, 1377, 1379, 1381, 1383, 1385, 1387, 1389, 1391, 1393, 1395, 1397, 1399, 1401, 1403, 1405, 1407, 1409, 1411, 1413, 1415, 1417, 1419, 1421, 1423, 1425, 1427, 1429, 1431, 1433, 1435, 1437, 1439, 1441, 1443, 1445, 1447, 1449, 1451, 1453, 1455, 1457, 1459, 1461, 1463, 1465, 1467, 1469, 1471, 1473, 1475, 1477, 1479, 1481, 1483, 1485, 1487, 1489, 1491, 1493, 1495, 1497, 1499, 1501, 1503, 1505, 1507, 1509, 1511, 1513, 1515, 1517, 1519, 1521, 1523, 1525, 1527, 1529, 1531, 1533, 1535, 1537, 1539, 1541, 1543, 1545, 1547, 1549, 1551, 1553, 1555, 1557, 1559, 1561, 1563, 1565, 1567, 1569, 1571, 1573, 1575, 1577, 1579, 1581, 1583, 1585, 1587, 1589, 1591, 1593, 1595, 1597, 1599, 1601, 1603, 1605, 1607, 1609, 1611, 1613, 1615, 1617, 1619, 1621, 1623, 1625, 1627, 1629, 1631, 1633, 1635, 1637, 1639, 1641, 1643, 1645, 1647, 1649, 1651, 1653, 1655, 1657, 1659, 1661, 1663, 1665, 1667, 1669, 1671, 1673, 1675, 1677, 1679, 1681, 1683, 1685, 1687, 1689, 1691, 1693, 1695, 1697, 1699, 1701, 1703, 1705, 1707, 1709, 1711, 1713, 1715, 1717, 1719, 1721, 1723, 1725, 1727, 1729, 1731, 1733, 1735, 1737, 1739, 1741, 1743, 1745, 1747, 1749, 1751, 1753, 1755, 1757, 1759, 1761, 1763, 1765, 1767, 1769, 1771, 1773, 1775, 1777, 1779, 1781, 1783, 1785, 1787, 1789, 1791, 1793, 1795, 17

NEWS

Euro up as Lafontaine goes

Europe was plunged into confusion as the German Finance Minister Oskar Lafontaine resigned after a fierce cabinet row with the Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder. The news of the departure of a man decried by *The Sun* as "the most dangerous man in Europe" was greeted with barely concealed glee in Downing Street and on international markets. Herr Lafontaine, only a few months in office, had made himself into Britain's bugbear by pushing hard for tax harmonisation. Pages 1, 15

Al Fayed brother wins passport

The brother of Mohamed Al Fayed won his six-year battle to get a UK passport, opening the way for the Harrods chairman himself. In giving his brother, Ali Fayed, his passport, Mr Straw ruled that a government report branding the brothers as liars was no longer relevant to the applications. Pages 1, 5

Oldest ancestor

Fossil hunters revealed the skull of what they said could be mammals' earliest ancestor: a creature which lived 250 million years ago beside an inland sea in what is now South Africa. Page 1

Goodbye Argentina

The Prince of Wales left Argentina with the feeling that he had become a pawn in the country's internal politics as it moves towards an election. Page 9

Cancer screening

Routine breast cancer screening in Britain is now as good as the high standards reached in the clinical trials that led to it being introduced ten years ago. Page 11

Peers rebellion

Hereditary peers have received an extraordinary call to rise up in rebellion against the Bill which would expel them from the House of Lords. Page 14

Doctor guilty

An anaesthetist who has been pilloried in Zimbabwe as a latter-day version of Josef Mengele had his conviction for causing the deaths of two children confirmed by the Supreme Court. Page 17

Guatemala apology

President Clinton has apologised for a dark and long-buried episode of America's foreign policy: its support for right-wing governments in Guatemala. Page 18

Clinton doubts

With Monica Lewinsky refusing to leave the headlines and accusations about past infidelities, President Clinton's marriage was reported to be under strain. Page 19

Close your eyes and think of Kubrick

The first scenes from *Eyes Wide Shut*, the final film made by Stanley Kubrick, were released and promptly judged too explicit to be shown on television. Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman are seen having sex in front of a mirror in the 90-second trailer that the film director made to show to cinema owners. The movie has been almost three years in the making. Page 3



Heidi and Kim relax with Kim Innes between obedience events at Crufts in the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, yesterday

BUSINESS

M&G bid: Prudential, the UK's biggest insurance company, launched an agreed bid for the fund manager, after a year of talks. Page 27

Euro gains: The euro staged a remarkable recovery as markets reacted with undisguised glee to the news that Oskar Lafontaine had resigned. Page 27

Mirror report: The Government is coming under pressure to publish a potentially explosive report into the 1991 flotation of Mirror Group Newspapers, after the High Court ruled that investigations of Kevin Maxwell are unfair. Page 27

Markets: The FTSE 100 rose 94.20 to 6385.7. The pound fell 0.07 cents to \$1.6265 but rose 0.72p against the euro to 66.60p. The g index rose to 103.5 from 102.7. Page 30

SPORT

Football: The Premier League chief executive, Peter Leaver, and chairman, Sir John Quinlan, resigned in the wake of controversy about the award of television consultancy contracts. Page 52

Boxing: The World Boxing Council is not happy with the appointment of Arthur Mercante Jr as referee for the bout between Lennox Lewis and Evander Holyfield. Page 52

Rugby union: Four players and six administrative staff have been released by Richmond in a first wave of redundancies aimed at cutting costs. Page 49

Golf: Mark James, the Europe Ryder Cup captain, had a first-round 67 to put himself in joint second place with 11 others in the Turspana Masters. Page 49

Bad sports: "London seems destined to play reluctant host to one public-building fiasco every decade, doesn't it?" Richard Morrison on the Battle of Wembley. Page 35

On stage: In London Amanda Harris takes on a role Coteau originally wrote for Edith Piaf; and Hugh Leonard's new play opens in Dublin. Page 35

Foot-tappers: The choreographer Richard Alston brings his dance company to the South Bank as part of a national tour that underlines his importance. Page 36

Friday pop: David Sinclair reviews the new albums by Blur and Beth Orton among others and assesses the threat to record sales posed by fans downloading from the Internet. Page 37

Menacing: "There is a peculiar air of menace — militancy even — about the build-up to March 14." Mother's Day bothers Jane Shilling. Page 20

Separate development: A year after appearing in a documentary about parenthood the model Beth Romani and her partner Sebastian Vince still live apart. Page 21

Joe Joseph: Tried Harold Pinter's bolognese sauce or Noel Coward's pancakes? How great writers cook the books. Page 21

Troubled tales: People affected by the Troubles are telling their stories on Radio Ulster. Page 38

Money spinner: What will be the next coup by Claudia Rosencrantz who brought us *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* Page 39

Testing: A preview of the new national curriculum tests for ages 7 and 11. Page 42

Over-studied: Some students are spending more time studying than is good for their results. Page 43

It is a bad time for Congress to debate whether the US should send troops to help police any peace reached in Kosovo. But there is no better time left.

— The Washington Post

RADIO & TV

Preview: Comic Relief: The fun starts with Lenny Henry and Denise van Outen (BBC1, 7pm) Review: Paul Hoggart finds the most expensive object in history. Pages 50, 51

OPINION

Kingmaker's head

Lafontaine stunned all Germany by resigning from his post as Finance Minister and leader of the Social Democrats. But he is unlikely to remain a quiet ghost. Page 23

The CAP still grows

Yesterday's stitched-together bargain on the reform of common agricultural policy will neither solve the EU's immediate budgetary problems nor meet the challenges of EU enlargement. Page 23

Dinner plate battle

As Prince Charles tucks in Uruguay may take pride that this is not the first time that they have served the British well. Page 23

COLUMNS

SIMON JENKINS

Most speeches in my experience are read, "because I can't do better". In which case, don't speak. The implication is that the audience has come merely for the pleasure of gazing on the speaker's face, as he reads what could be read far faster on its own. Page 22

GEORGE BRIDGES

Britain's education system is guilty of institutional incompetence, not racism. More than one in five adults, whatever their colour, can barely read a timetable. Page 22

PHILIP HOWARD

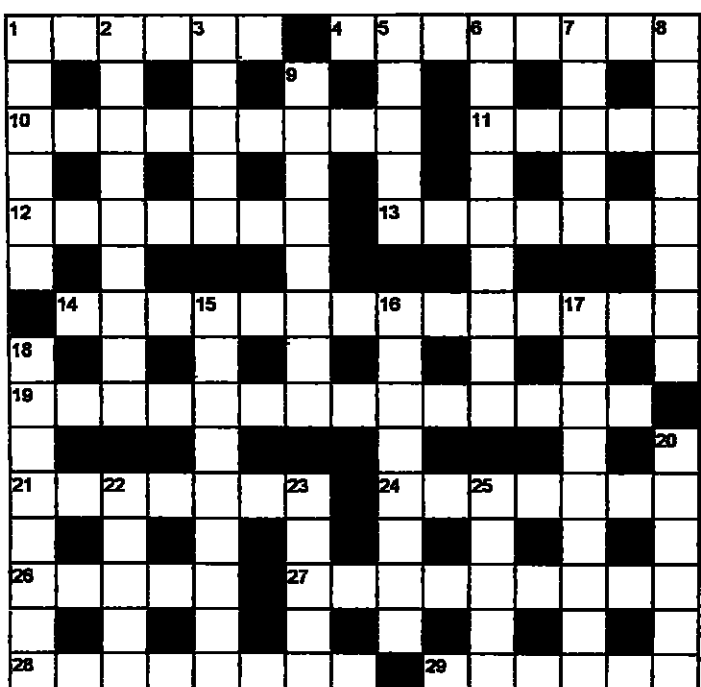
The Government has not yet thought through the literary and linguistic consequences of getting rid of the pound. To have Shylock insisting on his bond of 0.45359 kilograms of flesh will not fit into an iambic pentameter. Page 22

Sidney Gottlieb, CIA scientist: Ray Brock, winemaker, businessman and racing driver; Tom Balstow, journalist. Page 25

Budget: America's and global power: right to roam. Page 23

8, 18, 27, 32, 36, 49. Bonus: 46

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 21,049



- ACROSS**
- Flag officer (6).
 - Carried Scandinavian forces and desires with it (8).
 - Initially kept member of Jamaican cult inside (3,1,5).
 - Cycle about (5).
 - Fancy drink put forward (7).
 - Puzzling expression of grief at 5-0 (7).
 - Save from drowning someone out of his depth (4,3,2,5).
 - Lack of appreciation unless great fun is arranged (14).
 - Dairy product used in apricot tart (7).
 - ... cooked, then, can be delightful (7).
 - Bear's not right to invest like this (5).
 - He's been given prescription containing iodine, going by the book (9).
- DOWN**
- Southern vineyard given very little inspection (6).
 - Villain beginning to wisecrack and gag (6).
 - Inconsiderate, but not initially mischievous (6).
 - Lad has to remove cover from fish (9).
 - American private doctor introducing singular gadget (5).
 - Prefer one Conservative measure for local consumption (5).
 - Wrong year; wrong play at Twickenham (9).
 - Frequent answer received during investigation (5).
 - Cosmetic treatment — price due to be revised (8).
 - Alternative to husky man unable to talk (8).
 - Deep as emotions chap experienced about creative work (9).
 - Plenty to cry about formerly? On the contrary! (8).
 - Will try to get the last word, and thereby put end to argument (9).
 - Periods for which accommodation is required (8).
 - The way irritating sensation can become pain (6).
 - Having caught fish on river, get a drink (5).
 - A professional needs new stage part (5).
 - Can't always predict exact result when starting escapade (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 21,048

APPETITE PASTURE
LITHE GRILL
UNNEEDED HOTAIR
SKRIMMAGE
CABIN SEVERAL
GARDEN SWEATWORD
NORSE KENI
DEBUTANTE GAINS
IYER OCTI
DISAGREABLE
AOESTELP
TAXING DIATRIBE
EEROTIMS
SCREEN INDOLENT

Times Two Crossword, page 52

AIR INFORMATION

Latest Road and Weather conditions

UK Weather: All regions 0330 444 910
UK Weather: All regions 0330 444 910
UK Weather: All regions 0330 444 910
UK Weather: All regions 0330 444 910
UK Weather: All regions 0330 444 910

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European fuel costs 0330 444 910
Support information 0330 444 910
0330 444 910

Car reports by fax

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0330 444 910
0330 444 910
0330 444 910

HOURS OF DARKNESS

Sun rises: 6:22 am
Sun sets: 5:59 pm
Moon sets: 12:01 pm
Moon rises: 3:15 am

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up
46 (2%) of the raw material
for UK newspapers in 1997

THE TIMES

0330 444 910
0330 444 910
0330 444 910
0330 444 910
0330 444 910

FORECAST

General: England and Wales will become quite mild with sunny spells, but the sun in south. Frost SW wind. Max 13C (55F).
London, SE England, E Anglia, E Midlands: mild but dull with light rain, brightening slowly. Light SW wind. Max 13C (55F).
Cent S England, W Midlands, Channel Islands: dull at first, then sunny spells. Light SW breeze. Max 13C (55F).
SW, NW, Cent N England, S&N Wales, Lakes, Iolls: early rain, then sunny spells and isolated showers later. Light SW wind. Max 12C (54F).
E, NE England: early rain, then sunny spells. Moderate SW wind. Max 11C (52F).

AROUND BRITAIN

24 hrs to 5 pm b = bright, c = cloud, d = drizzle, ds = dust storm, du = dull, f = fog, g = gales, h = hail, r = rain, sh = shower, sl = sleet, s = sun, t = thunder

Yesterday's highest day max — Jersey, 13C (55F); lowest day max — Dumfries, South Lanarkshire, 4C (39F); most rain — Stormowey, 0.83in, most sun — Skegness, 7.1hr

TEMPERATURES AT MIDDAY LOCAL TIME ON WEDNESDAY. X = NOT AVAILABLE

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Blur back to best

Arts, page 37



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THE TIMES



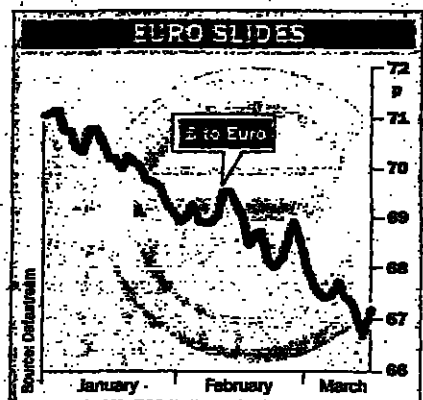
Wembley, what a fiasco

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY MARCH 12 1999

Euro revives after Lafontaine resigns



By ALASDAIR MURRAY
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE euro staged a remarkable recovery yesterday as international markets reacted with undisguised glee to the news that Oskar Lafontaine, the German Finance Minister, had resigned.

Investors quickly concluded that Herr Lafontaine's departure would bring an end to the feuding between the European Central Bank and the German Government which has marred the euro's debut.

The euro, which had traded close to record lows for most of the day, jumped more than two cents against the dollar within minutes of the resignation — climbing from \$1.0800 to settle at about \$1.1000. The

euro also wiped out most of its earlier losses against the pound, climbing back from a record low of 66.45p to reach 67.2p.

Earlier in the day the euro's problems had been thrown into sharp relief by comments made by George Soros, the billionaire speculator. Mr Soros said that the currency would remain under pressure as long as political tensions remained between the European Central Bank and some member states.

Analysts predicted that the resignation would boost the chances of a European rate cut because the ECB would now feel its independence was no longer under threat.

Gwyn Hache, European economist at HSBC, said: "Lafontaine was persistent in calling on the ECB to cut, and the ECB couldn't be seen as giving into his wishes." But some

economists added a note of caution, saying that, until a successor was appointed, huge uncertainties remain. Robin Marshall, head of research at Chase, the investment bank, said: "It doesn't solve the underlying policy issues in euroland, so the danger of pressures between fiscal and monetary policy remains."

European bonds, including British gilts, also climbed higher after the resignation. The news, however, came too late to have any impact on European stock markets, although analysts predicted that European markets would climb higher today on hopes of an ECB rate cut and because of the widespread perception that Herr Lafontaine was anti-business.

Shares in London are also expected to test new highs after setting a record yesterday.

The market was buoyed by a strong performance from oil stocks as Opec countries finally moved towards an agreement to cut production. The news sent oil prices climbing and also helped to push Wall Street more than 100 points higher to its own record high. The FTSE 100 index of leading shares closed up 94.2 at 6,335.7, having earlier also touched a record intra-day high of 6,360.3. Shares in BP and Shell, which closed up 9.3 per cent and 8.3 per cent respectively, contributed about 60 points to the FTSE 100's gain. Financial services shares also made strong gains after the surprise Prudential Corporation takeover bid for M&G Group revived hopes of further consolidation in the sector.

Commentary, page 29

The Pru to pay £1.9bn for M&G takeover

By CAROLINE MERRELL, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

PRUDENTIAL, Britain's biggest insurer, yesterday paid £1.9 billion in cash to secure M&G, the fund management group, in a bid to consolidate its position in the retail financial services market.

The Pru's cash offer, recommended by the M&G board, values M&G shares at £25, a 40 per cent premium to the previous night's close of £17.874p. Five months ago, they stood at less than £10.

The takeover, which comes after a year of talking to each other, will enhance Prudential's retail product range and position it for what it believes will be huge growth in the savings and pensions market. The Pru estimates that this market will grow from £160 billion to £420 billion over the next five years.

Pointing to recent government initiatives, which the Pru believes will lead to massive

M&G's retail fund management operation, which has more than £10 billion under management, will be merged with Prudential's unit trust division, which has about £3 billion under management. The M&G brand will be kept.

M&G's life and pensions business, which has £3 billion under management, will be joined with Prudential's life and pensions business, while M&G's institutional funds will be put together with Prudential's Portfolio Management. M&G has more than 700,000 customers, while Prudential has ten million worldwide.

Sir Peter said the Pru first approached M&G about a year ago. M&G was at that time suffering from a deluge of bad publicity over poor fund performance. Independent financial advisers, its main source of distribution, had been put off selling its products and M&G was forced to implement a series of internal changes to try to tighten up its investment methods and performance.

Crucial to the takeover has been the role of the Esme Fairbairn Charitable Trust, which owns about 33.3 per cent of M&G. The trust was set up by Ian Fairbairn, one of the founders of M&G. The trust had always been reluctant to sell. John Fairbairn, Ian Fairbairn's nephew and the trust's chairman, said: "We have a continuing regard and a kind of parental attitude to M&G. We think the two companies fit together very well." Fairbairn himself stands to make £11 million from the deal.

Some analysts claimed that Prudential was paying too much for M&G. Thomas Rayner at SG Securities said: "It is a bit of a full price at 10 per cent of M&G's funds under management. M&G is almost all retail business but it is pretty aggressive for a group which has been struggling in terms of performance."

The deal leaves Schroders and Perpetual as the two remaining big quoted independent fund managers in the UK.



Bob Seelert, head of Saatchi & Saatchi, whose clients include the British Army, paraded a 30 per cent profit rise in the firm's first full year since demerger

By RAYMOND SNOODY

SAATCHI & SAATCHI, the advertising group whose clients include the British Army, celebrated its first full year since the demerger from Cordant with a 30 per cent rise in underlying pre-tax profits to £30.7 million.

Bob Seelert, Saatchi chairman and architect of the de-

Seelert marches ahead

merger, said: "We could have sunk like a stone or flown like a bird. Both companies have done well, but we have got the better numbers."

The companies began sepa-

rate trading in December 1997 at 110p each. Yesterday Cordant was unchanged at 164½p, while Saatchi rose 6p to 189½p. "Shareholders should have a smile on their faces," said

Mr Seelert, who is closer than his erstwhile colleagues to his target for a 10 per cent margin in 1999. The Saatchi margin, including income from joint ventures, rose to 9.3 per cent

(8.8 per cent) in the year to September.

Saatchi won a record \$500 million (£300 million) net new billings in the year and has won a further \$200 million so far this year.

The company, which did not pay an interim dividend, has lifted the final payment to 1.4p (1.2p).

Warning hits Reed Elsevier

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

SHARES of Reed Elsevier fell sharply yesterday after the Anglo-Dutch information group reported a fall in underlying profits and gave warning that earnings growth would be negligible this year.

The shares fell 51p to a low of 513½p before edging higher to close at 532½p, down 32p on the day. Investors were also concerned by the company's failure to name a new chief executive after a seven-month search.

The position is vacant after Nigel Stapleton's decision to leave the group. Mr Stapleton is currently co-chairman, sharing the role with Herman Brugink, head of Elsevier, the group's Dutch arm.

Reed Elsevier yesterday said the search had been narrowed to just two candidates from outside the group, and an announcement was possible at the company's annual meeting next month.

The company reported a 6 per cent fall in adjusted pre-

tax profits to £773 million in 1998 and the co-chairman said that 1999 "will not be a year of any significant profit growth".

Despite the setback Mr Stapleton said that "looking behind the numbers" there was plenty to give shareholders confidence. The 1998 results had been affected by issues that were unlikely to recur. They included the 2 per cent earnings growth lost through dilution from the sale of IPC Magazines, which netted a £692 million exceptional gain, adverse currency movements and problems with Reed's travel information business.

During the year Reed Elsevier also spent £80 million on new developments including the commercial launch of ScienceDirect, an online data base containing 1,000 scientific journals in electronic form and updates to Lexis-News, the legal and general data base.

Mirror report pressure grows

By JON ASHWORTH

THE Government is coming under pressure to publish a potentially explosive report into the 1991 flotation of Mirror Group Newspapers, after the High Court ruled that ongoing investigations of Kevin Maxwell are unfair.

In a ruling handed down yesterday, which raises serious questions about the methods used in Department of Trade and Industry investigations, Sir Richard Scott, the Vice-Chancellor, said DTI inspectors were unreasonable and oppressive in demanding interviews with Mr Maxwell, youngest son of the late publishing tycoon Robert Maxwell. Rejecting the DTI's attempt to commit Mr Maxwell, 39, for contempt, the judge said the inspectors should make use of evidence gathered in previous interviews.

The DTI may now find it hard to resist calls to publish an interim report into the MGN flotation after an inves-

tigation in which evidence has been seen or heard from 276 witnesses.

The report threatens serious embarrassment to leading figures in both politics and industry. There have been suggestions that it has been deliberately suppressed. A DTI spokesman said last night: "We hope the judgment will allow the impasse to be resolved and lead to a speedy resolution of the inspectors' inquiry."

Mr Maxwell, who defended himself in court, borrowed £15,000 from friends to pay for legal advice. He is seeking to recover his costs from the DTI. Mr Maxwell said: "The DTI were asking the court to find me in contempt, to send me to prison or fine me £10,000. The judge has said the procedures were oppressive and unfair and there was no requirement for me to answer the questions."

Commentary, page 29

Canary Wharf chiefs net £6m

By CARL MORTISHED

TWO Canary Wharf directors will secure an instant gain of about £6 million on flotation if they exercise options granted to them only a year ago.

George Iacobescu, chief executive, and Peter Anderson, finance director, were each granted options over shares, exercisable at a price of 79½p. Canary Wharf yesterday revealed that shares in the flotation would be placed with institutions at a price between 280p and 350p, valuing the company at £1.9 billion to £2.3 billion.

Mr Iacobescu has options over 3.6 million shares and Mr Anderson over a million shares. At the maximum placing price, the net gain for the two men would be more than £12 million, though only half of the options are exercisable immediately.

The pathfinder prospectus, published yesterday, also reveals that Paul Reichmann, who founded Canary Wharf, has been issued warrants that will increase his stake from 11

per cent to 15 per cent after the flotation. The warrants are exercisable at a price of 450p.

The flotation price has been struck at the low end of valuation estimates for the company which owns a 4.7 million sq ft office development in London's Docklands. The sponsors appear not to have adopted a discounted cashflow valuation by Hillier Parker and Savills which included future profits and tax breaks pricing the company at £2.6 billion.

The owners, including Mr Reichmann, Prince al-Waleed bin Talal, CNA Financial, Franklin Mutual, the Glick family and interests of Edmond Safra, are not selling shares, but Canary Wharf will raise up to £850 million in new funds.

Canary Wharf is not being sold to private investors; among risk factors cited in the prospectus is the impact of the euro on London's financial market.

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Telecom Italia to buy in mobile division

By CARL MORTISHED
INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS EDITOR

TELECOM ITALIA plans to buy in its \$55 billion mobile telephone associate business, in a massive restructuring aimed at fending off a \$58 billion (£36 billion) bid from Olivetti, the ambitious electronics and telecoms conglomerate.

Franco Bernabè, chief executive of the embattled Italian utility, revealed the company's industrial strategy, comprising an offer for the outstanding 40 per cent of TIM, the mobile phone company, disposals of non-core assets, the enfranchisement of its so-called "savings" shares and a share buyback.

The move could scupper the bid by the much smaller Olivetti. Should Telecom Italia succeed in securing approval from its investors at a general meeting on April 16, the enlarged group could be valued at more than \$100 billion, well beyond the reach of Olivetti.

Olivetti is only bidding for the ordinary shares of Telecom Italia. By enfranchising the savings shares, which receive dividends but have no vote, Telecom Italia will modernise its share structure and raise the stakes for Olivetti.

Telecom Italia needs investor consent to get approval for the restructuring from Consob, the Italian stock market regulator. However, analysts yesterday said the telephone utility would have little trouble in securing the necessary majority. TIM investors are being offered a premium of about 10 per cent in the offer.

Analysts reckoned that the integration of TIM was overdue as the company risked losing the full benefit of growth in mobile phones. One said: "TIM was spun off to realise its value but telephone companies are seeing more business migrating to mobiles."

In addition, Telecom Italia is launching a share buyback programme for 10 per cent of the equity which will be financed by a £10 billion (£6.6 billion) financing on the capital markets.

Weekend Money website:
<http://www.times-money.co.uk>

Electra proposes £500m share buyback scheme

By ROBERT COLE, CITY CORRESPONDENT

ELECTRA Investment Trust, the embattled £1.3 billion venture capital fund, has offered to buy back its own shares at a cost of £544 million.

The offer, worth 78p a share, sets a bid benchmark for 31, the rival venture capital specialist that wants to buy Electra. 31's offer of 70p a share was turned down by the Electra board last month. Yesterday 31 said it was "considering its position".

Electra shares yesterday rose 40p to 729.5p. The price fell short of the buy-in price because of fears that 31 will be unwilling to match the 78p offer.

In addition, Electra will only purchase a maximum of 40 per cent of the stock and doubts are being expressed about the value of Electra shares that will remain in existence after the buy-in is complete.

Electra's board attempted to raise hopes that the underlying value of the trust is greater than 78p.

The 78p offer is equivalent to an updated net asset value published yesterday by Electra.

But the board said its valuation policy was conservative. It said a more realistic value, given that past NAVs had underestimated realisable values for unquoted investments, was 915p a share.

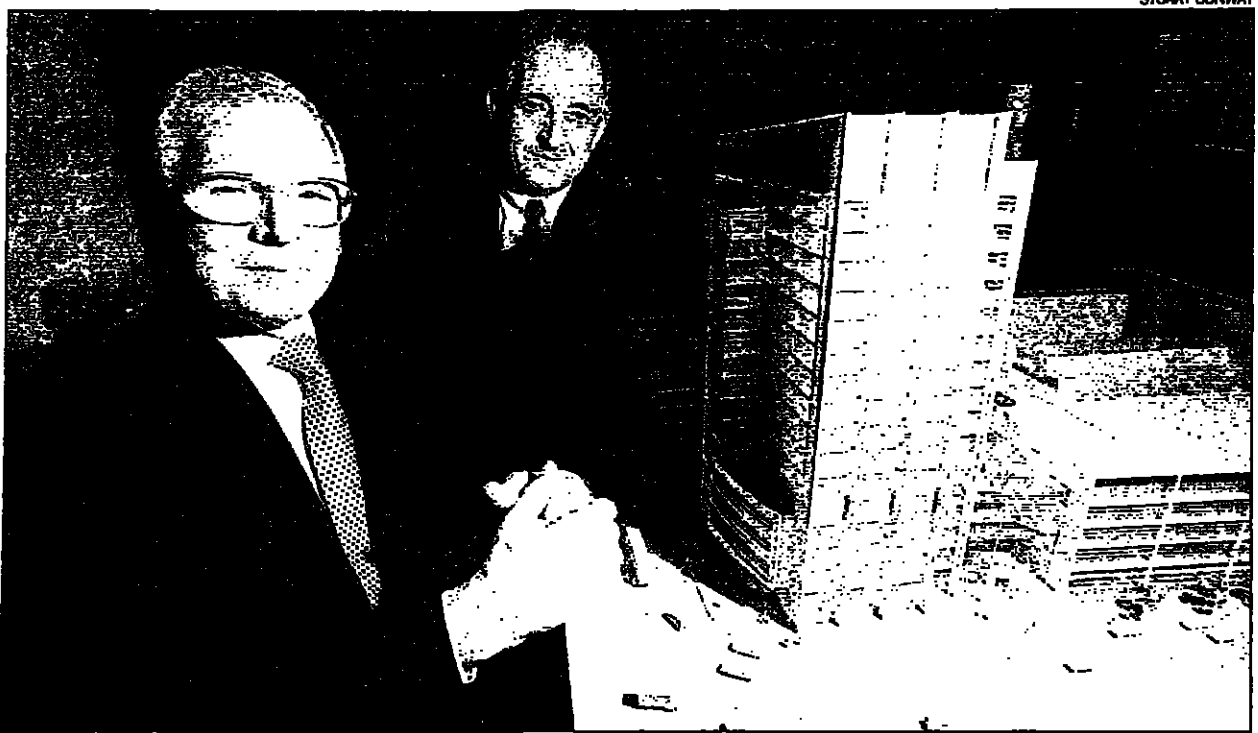
Peter Walls, investment trust analyst at Credit Lyonnais Securities, the stockbroker, said: "The 915p is pie in the sky stuff. People will be concentrating on 78p. That is a credible figure."

Directors yesterday pledged not to apply for shares in the buyback, as Electra attempted

to emphasise its belief that the true value of at least 915p would be proved correct. The buyback at 78p is structured as a tender offer. Electra will borrow up to £750 million to fund the purchase.

Yesterday Electra also announced the purchase of the outstanding 50 per cent of Electra Fleming, the fund management company that manages the Electra trust, from Robert Fleming, the investment bank, for £30 million.

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Sydney Gillibrand, left, chairman, and Peter Mason, chief executive, in front of a model of one of AMEC's latest developments

AMEC negotiates better return

By PAUL ARMSTRONG

AMEC, the construction group, has started to reap the benefits of its move away from competitive tendering with a 30 per cent jump in profit before tax and exceptional.

The increase took profit on this basis to £71.4 million for 1998. Profits on asset sales in 1997 meant the result after exceptional was up just 1.2 per cent at £69.2 million.

The strong growth in negoti-

ated contracts, as opposed to those it tendered for, furthered AMEC's campaign to differentiate itself from the rest of the construction sector. Investors responded by marking up AMEC shares by 12 per cent to 238p. The stock has run from 155p in the past two months.

Peter Mason, chief executive, said that 60 per cent of the capital project work won by AMEC in the UK last year was negotiated, bringing higher margins. Mr Mason said this

was part of the company's strategy to provide a one-stop shop supplying the full range of construction-related services, from finance and design to building ownership and management.

Mr Mason said that there were signs that some European companies wanted new headquarters built on this basis. Operating profit in the company's capital projects division leapt 117 per cent to £20.6 million, although margins were still low at about 1 per cent. Mr

Mason said these were expected to improve as AMEC shifted away from tendering.

AMEC's service businesses recorded a 24 per cent rise in profit to £33.3 million and its order books grew by 18 per cent to £880 million.

This was helped by the low oil price, which has encouraged petroleum companies to outsource much of their work. A final dividend of 4.15p was declared, taking the year's payout to 6.25p, up 25 per cent.

UB calls for law on labelling GM food

By FRASER NELSON

UNITED BISCUITS, the food company that has just lost its chief executive to EMI, has called for the establishment of an international hallmark system to identify all genetically modified food.

The company, which makes McVitie's biscuits, said that the industry lacks a cast-iron guarantee that it is not buying ingredients derived from genetically modified (GM) crops. It said that, for the past 18 months, it has only used suppliers who say their ingredients are GM-free — but no one has been able to rule out traces of GM food appearing in products.

Eric Nicol, who is to be replaced by Leslie van de Walle as chief executive, said: "At the moment, we're not required to say anything on the label. We are pushing for legislation to decide a sensible threshold above which GM food would be identified. We think GM food is safe, but if our customers don't want it, we'll try not to give it to them."

UB's underlying profit rose 4 per cent to £110 million for the 52 weeks to January 2. Return on capital employed, which Mr Nicol sees as the most important measure of its performance, rose by 1.8 points to 18.6 per cent. After £30.8 million of exceptional items, full pre-tax profit dropped to an expected £79.3 million (£90.4 million). The £150 million share buyback programme lifted earnings per share to 11.5p (11.1p).

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City diary, page 31

Alchemy in hotels deal

ALCHEMY PARTNERS, the venture capitalist, has joined forces with Greenwich NatWest, the global debt markets division of NatWest Group, to launch what is thought to be Europe's first securitisation of the hotel sector. The £52 million securitisation of Paramount Hotels, which Alchemy acquired for £77 million last summer, will allow the company to expand at a time of increasing consolidation.

Hurricane batters Cox Insurance

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

SHARES in Cox Insurance Holdings fell a further 16p to 156p yesterday after the Lloyd's insurer published final results. This followed a profits warning in December.

Pre-tax profits before the amortisation of goodwill and the cost of buying syndicate capacity fell from £20.4 million in the first nine months of 1997 to £19.8 million for the whole of 1998. Adjusted earnings per share declined from 13.1p to 12.2p for the same periods.

The drop in profits was largely caused by rise in exceptional

claims in commercial underwriting. A large claim from a Polish power plant combined with losses arising from Hurricane Georges in the Caribbean and continued losses on American extended warranties.

The company has hired a new chief executive for the commercial business — Stephen Bungay from Boston Consulting. Michael Dawson, chief executive, said the outlook for the commercial business remained tough.

Cox is paying a final dividend of 2.6p, making a year total of 3.5p, which compares with the 3.1p paid for the first nine months of 1997.

EXCHANGE RATES					
	Bank Buys	Bank Sells	Bank Buys	Bank Sells	Bank Buys
Australia \$	2.69	2.48	Italy Lira	2050	2843
Austria Sch	21.64	19.98	Japan Yen	210.41	192.88
Belgium F	63.89	58.73	Malta	0.677	0.618
Canada \$	2.597	2.400	Netherlands Gld	3.486	3.261
Cyprus Cyp £	0.9122	0.8407	New Zealand \$	3.19	2.95
Denmark Kr	11.74	10.85	Norway Kr	13.37	12.43
Egypt	5.74	5.13	Portugal Esc	202.48	251.18
Finland Mk	9.47	8.72	S Africa Rd	10.64	9.88
France F	10.31	9.23	Spain Pes	281.03	242.24
Germany Dm	3.096	2.854	Sweden Kr	14.08	12.38
Greece Dr	5.08	4.68	Switzerland Fr	2.546	2.328
Hong Kong \$	13.43	12.23	Turkey Lira	60.000	65.000
Iceland	1.26	1.09	USA \$	1.723	1.580
Indonesia	1.6863	1.3893	Rates for small denominations only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at 11.15.88		
Ireland Pt	1.2356	1.1486			
Israel Sh	6.89	6.23			

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

The Index-Tracking PEP

Source: Macropol UGM, Legal & General FTSE All-Share Index-Tracking PEP on an offer to bid basis based on all PEP charges with gross income: from £11.15 (since launch) to £11.05. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. From 10.14.99 tax credits on UK dividend distributions will only be able to be reclaimed by PEPs at a reduced rate of 10%. Both capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. Full written details are available on request. All statements are correct as at 01.03.99. The Government have announced that contributions can only be made to PEPs until April 1999. From that date a new tax privileged savings vehicle, the Individual Savings Account (ISA) will be available. Legal & General (Investment) Limited, Registered in England No 2703980, Registered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4N 4TP. Representative only of the Legal & General marketing group, members of which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and DMO for the purposes of recommending, advising on and selling life assurance and investment products. Please refer to Legal & General's name.

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Asda victory in medicine price war

ASDA scored a significant victory in its campaign to start price wars in the medicine market yesterday after the Office of Fair Trading won approval to hold a hearing into the matter. The Restrictive Practices Court will meet at the end of next year to decide whether to abolish the price-fixing system that allows drug manufacturers to control the price of non-prescription medicine. It will consider Asda's claim that this system represents a health tax that leads to £200 million of overcharging each year. This is countered by small chemists, who believe that 3,000 out of Britain's 12,000 pharmacies will be forced out of business if they have to compete with the supermarkets.

Asda's case was taken up three years ago by John Bridgman, Director-General of Fair Trading, who asked for the matter to be decided by the Restrictive Practices Court three years ago. Mr Bridgman said yesterday: "This is good news for the consumers who have been forced to pay unnecessarily high prices for too long. The court agreed with me that the market has changed in the last 29 years and it is time to look again at whether retail price maintenance is in the public interest." In 1970 it was decided that price-fixing was vital to protect small chemist shops from competing with supermarkets.

BBA meeting on VAT

THE British Bankers Association is to have an urgent meeting with Customs & Excise over changes to the VAT rules in the Budget which apply the tax to the outsourcing of many of the banks' back office functions. The BBA claims the changes will cost the banks more than £75 million in extra tax. Leading accountants have pointed out that the change was contrary to the Chancellor's comments in the Budget that he would not be widening the scope of VAT.

Phytopharm trials

PHYTOPHARM, the company developing medicines from plants, is to begin phase II trials of a product thought to have the potential to prevent cancer of the colon. Richard Dixey, chief executive, said: "This might be the tamoxifen for colon cancer" — a reference to the controversial Zeneca drug that US researchers believe can prevent women developing breast cancer. Phytopharm shares, up 10p to 282.5p, have multiplied in value six times in 15 months.

BoS targets savers

BANK OF SCOTLAND has become the latest financial services company to exploit the increasing demand for long-term savings by launching its own life assurance, pensions and investments business. Edinburgh Fund Managers will handle investment management for the business on an actively managed basis, while Legal & General will provide index-tracking investment products. The new range of products will be known as the Bank of Scotland Investors Club.

Thomson-CSF pledge

THOMSON-CSF, the French defence electronics group, reported an expected 1998 loss of £232 million (£155 million) but said it would be back in profit this year and promised big gains in operating profit from 2001. The losses arise from exceptional changes taken against restructuring aimed at cutting costs. Operating profit, struck before exceptional, rose 7 per cent to £335 million. In January Thomson lost to British Aerospace in a bid for the Marconi defence electronics subsidiary of GEC.

EBRD stays in Russia

THE European Bank for Reconstruction and Development promised yesterday that it would not quit Russia despite reporting huge year-end losses stemming from the country's financial meltdown. Steven Kaempfer, EBRD vice-president for finance, said the bank was investing for the long term. The EBRD said the Russian collapse had forced it to make provisions of \$531 million (£390 million), three times higher than the previous year. It reported an overall loss of 261.2 million euros; operating profits rose.

BT takes £90m stake

BRITISH TELECOM made its first investment in Latin America with a 20 per cent stake in ImpSat, which is valued at £450 million. Sir Peter Bonfield, BT's chief executive, said BT was paying £90 million for its stake as a way of gaining access to big corporate customers in key cities in Brazil, Argentina and Mexico. The company, which has specialised in data, Internet and e-commerce services, will market Concert, BT's international services arm.

Qualceram advances

QUALCERAM, the bathroom furniture supplier based in Wicklow in the Republic of Ireland, said that, while its home market continues to grow, trading conditions in the UK are competitive. In the year to December 31, 1998, group sales rose 21 per cent to £10.6 million (£9 million) and pre-tax profits rose 23 per cent to £1.2 million. Earnings per share increased 18 per cent to 11.4p. The company recommended a final dividend of 12.2p per share, lifting the full-year payout 10 per cent to 13.3p.

Wyevalle enjoys growth

WYEVILLE Garden Centres bucked the trend of their retailing cousins on the high street by enjoying an 11.7 per cent like-for-like sales increase at Christmas, which made up for tough trading earlier in the year, induced by the poor weather. Like-for-like sales for 1998 grew by 4.1 per cent though acquisitions during the 12 months swelled sales to £75 million from £63 million. Pre-tax profits edged up 2 per cent to £9.3 million. The final dividend is 3.13p making a total of 7.7p (6.86p).

Just ten weeks into the new year and the Oskar had a dramatic new currency, which up immediately.

Oskar Lafontaine had been called for a week proved exceedingly successful getting what he wanted ranked on about the new European Central Bank interest rates, he did just what our own de Short did for the Railtrack price. If both in had been swishing blood and dripping blood from his grins, they could have scored higher on the scale.

The spectre of socialism was not a new Labour Gov would renationalise ways, so drastically reducing attractiveness of an investment in the Railtrack privatisation, who had apparently been largely in step with the run-up to his election in the run-up to his election in September, emerged as a rationally out of the Schroeder's centre left.

While Tony Blair has been towards Europe, Oskar has played an important role in reminding those paying attention to the right to be cautious about the single currency. Finance Minister concerned about his country.

Wassall value mark

By PAUL ARMSTRONG

WASSALL, the conglomerate that is reinventing itself as an investment firm, estimated its value at 34p a share yesterday, almost twice its market price.

Chris Miller, chief executive, said: "We are more confident of adding value for shareholders than at any time since the creation of Wassall in the late Eighties."

In October Wassall bought

OM opts for £3bn listing

MEMBERS of Old Mutual, the South African life assurance company, yesterday voted overwhelmingly in favour of shedding its mutual status in favour of a £3 billion share listing in London and Johannesburg (Martin Barrow writes).

Old Mutual, which will be ranked fifth among London-based life insurers, has 3.2 million policyholders, many of whom have never before owned shares. Each will receive a minimum of 200 shares.

It hopes to win a place in the FTSE 100 index following other South African groups such as South African Breweries, Old Mutual bought British stockbrokers Albert E. Sharp and Capel Cure Meyers last year.

Chorion as it re

CHORION, the leisure group formerly known as Trocadero, bounced back into the black last year and will pay a dividend for the first time since John Conlan and Nick Tamblin took the helm in July 1997.

The group reported a pre-tax profit of £3.02 million compared with a write-down-hit £31.6 million loss in 1997. Earnings per share reached 0.48p compared with a loss per share of 6.80p. Shareholders will get a dividend of 0.1p "reflect-

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No tears for this Oskar



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Just ten weeks into its existence and the euro has claimed its first finance minister's scalp. The removal of 'Red' Oskar had a dramatic effect on the new currency, which perked up immediately.

Oskar Lafontaine had consistently called for a weak euro and proved exceedingly successful in getting what he wanted. As he ranted on about the need for the European Central Bank to slash interest rates, he did for the euro just what our own dear Clare Short did for the Railtrack flotation price. If both individuals had been swishing black capes and dripping blood from ghoulish grins, they could hardly have scored higher on the fear factor.

The spectre of socialism frightened markets. Mr Short intimated that a new Labour Government would renationalise the railways, so drastically reducing the attractiveness of an investment in the Railtrack privatisation. Lafontaine, who had appeared to be largely in step with Schroeder in the run-up to his election last September, emerged as embarrassingly out of step with Schroeder's centre-left coalition.

While Tony Blair has been heading towards Europe, Oskar Lafontaine has played an invaluable role in reminding those who were paying attention of just why it is right to be cautious about signing up to the single currency. The German Finance Minister is rightly concerned about his country's economic plight.

Germany's economy shrunk in the last quarter of 1998; its industrial production fell by 7.8 per cent, a rather worse performance than even Japan managed.

Herr Lafontaine's prescribed solution was to hack down interest rates and let spending rip. But one-size solutions do not fit every country's problems and his demands caused consternation within the EU as well as without. The European Central Bank, as independent as our own Bank in setting interest rates, may have been unmoved by Oskar's lamentations but there were some who feared that had he been able to, he would have bludgeoned down the ECB door and set the rate himself.

While he was worrying about interest rates, he failed to deliver the tax reforms for which German industry is crying out. The result has been to deter foreign investment from the country and to make some German organisations consider whether they might not be more comfortable headquartered elsewhere.

The head of the Federation of German Industries, Hans-Olaf Henkel, was moved to blurt that "we find ourselves in the difficult situation of having someone who

knows nothing about business, who never studied economics, telling us what we should think about business and economics." That is a predicament in which people in many countries can find themselves. As they fully digest Gordon Brown's Budget, many in Britain may sympathise with Herr Henkel. But they should ask themselves whether they would feel more comfortable with the European version.

Sir Peter sticks to hoarses for courses

Sir Peter Davis was nursing a sore throat yesterday but even his hoarseness could not disguise his delight in his latest acquisition. Not so long ago Sir Peter thought a bank or a building society would be the perfect complement to his business but good sense has prevailed. Old-fashioned financial institutions are lumbered with vast

property portfolios. With the hugely successful launch of Egg, the Pru has demonstrated that heavy real estate costs are not a prerequisite of a successful financial services business. The banks are struggling to offload their unwanted properties, the demand from breweries intent on opening yet another new drinking establishment to trade under the banner "Counting House" or "The Vaults" having slowed of late.

Today telephone banking is taking a growing share of the market and Internet banking is coming along behind. The mushrooming of automatic teller machines in useful places such as train stations and even — oh, what innovation — in Marks & Spencer stores renders most bank branches redundant.

But M&G brings new products and marketing expertise to the Pru and together they should be able to make the most of the increase in personal saving that they believe inevitable. The Isas

and Lisas and stakeholder pensions that are going to rake in the extra cash are not vouchers for heavy profits. The emphasis, underlined by the Chancellor again on Tuesday, is that these new products should be low-cost offerings. With Government intent on taking over from the Consumers' Association, and the FSA set to publish the equivalent of Which? guides to personal finance, margins on the new savings and pensions products are going to look a little thin.

The answer, reasons Sir Peter, lies in volume. That is what M&G will bring to the Pru, already digesting Scottish Amicable. Systems will be combined, costs brought down and the result will be a boost to the bottom line.

The M&G name will remain. Rather like the Pru, it seems that its reputation with the public has survived despite some apparent efforts to destroy it. The fund manager did not mis-sell, perhaps, but it did mismanage, and

over several years its relative performance slouched. But Michael McIntock has been striving to rejuvenate the organisation, and there is a feeling in the City that he is winning. Certainly the Pru feels that it is buying M&G when it is "on the turn".

Arnault fashions Gucci coup

While the fashion editors concentrate on hemlines and the extraordinary head-dresses that Alexander McQueen set atop his models, City editors are having more fun watching the spat between two fashion businesses. The dispute between LVMH and Gucci seems set to outlast Paris Fashion Week and could still be going next season.

The two companies have now agreed that they should do the bidding of the Amsterdam court and start talking about how they could settle their dispute. The two sides seem likely to end up spitting pins at each other. Bernard Arnault, of LVMH, is not about to give up the 34 per cent stake he has acquired in Gucci and Gucci

is reluctant to back track on its clever wheeze of diluting his stake by doling out new shares to staff. But the crafty M Arnault has a record of coming out of such apparent impasses with a victor's smile. If he offers Gucci a solemn undertaking — and they would probably want it in triplicate and witnessed by lawyers — that he would not increase his stake in the business, Gucci would appear churlish if they did not at least listen to his contentions of why LVMH would be able to boost Gucci's profitability.

Both sides are assembling the arguments to demonstrate their cases. Superficially, Gucci's record seems to show that it does not need M Arnault's input. But the man who successfully held the Diageo deal to ransom should not be underestimated.

Straw's law

JACK STRAW says he will not take account of a DTI inspectors' report critical of Mohamed Al Fayed when deciding whether to give him citizenship: too much time has passed since the events of 1986. Mr Straw is following good precedent. It was the City's collective decision to draw a veil over an old DTI report which said Robert Maxwell was unfit to run a public company, that allowed the late MP to get his hands on all those pension funds. Now the DTI is looking into Maxwell's second coming.

Wassall puts value at twice market price

By PAUL DURMAN

WASSALL, the conglomerate that is reinventing itself as an investment firm, estimated its value at 341p a share yesterday — almost twice its market price. Chris Miller, chief executive, said: "We are more confident of adding value for shareholders than at any time since the creation of Wassall in the late Eighties."

In October Wassall bought

TLC, the Thorn Lighting business, for £363 million, and it has also acquired a 9.3 per cent stake in BICC, the cables group. It was the cables industry that gave Wassall one of its most spectacular past successes, with its investment in General Cable of the US, which produced a £278 million profit.

However, the market has not welcomed the company's attempt to act as a private equity firm. Its shares have collapsed from 38p early last year to only 192p.

The group's existing trading activities — which include DTI sealants, bottle tops and sub-cases — maintained annual profits at £32.8 million (£32.1 million) in difficult trading conditions. Wassall said that, after stripping out currency, profits from continuing operations rose 12 per cent.

Pre-tax profits were £25.1 million. The previous year's total was boosted by the gain on General Cable.

A final dividend of 5.5p leaves the total unchanged at 7.8p a share.

Mr Miller said Thorn Lighting "has tremendous potential and already looks like a great acquisition". In the final few months of the year it contributed £7.1 million of profits.

Wassall has embarked on a wide-ranging European reorganisation of Thorn Lighting, and it plans to invest an additional £30 million in it over the next three years.

The group said it still has substantial scope to make further acquisitions.

Food and drink group says the worst of the Asian economic crisis is over



Spirited performance: Tony Greener, left, chairman of Diageo, and John McGrath, chief executive, reported that the outlook for the company was positive

Diageo remains optimistic

By DOMINIC WALSH

DIAGEO, the Burger King restaurants to Gordon's gin group, said yesterday that the worst effects of the Asian economic crisis were now behind it and the general outlook was "pretty positive".

In the half-year to December 31, the group's UDV spirits and wine division saw a 19 per cent decline in profits in the region, with volumes down by 30 per cent. However, Phil Yea, finance director, said: "In

recent months there has been a marginal improvement, albeit from a lower base."

The Asian crisis, allied to uncertainty in Latin America, were among the factors that contributed to a 12.5 per cent decline in Diageo's profits before tax and exceptional to £105 million. Some £54 million of profit was lost from the sale of Dewar's whisky and Bombay gin to satisfy regulatory requirements after the merger of Guinness and GrandMét.

However, underlying profits were up 4 per cent on a comparable basis and the group said it had achieved margin savings of £61 million during the period. Earnings per share excluding exceptional were down 0.5 per cent to 20.5p but the interim dividend has been lifted by 8 per cent to 7.8p.

UDV reported a 4 per cent rise in operating profits to £599 million, with Europe and North America both seeing strong growth. Volumes for its top five brand/market combinations, where the bulk of mar-

keting investment is being channelled, rose by 3 per cent. Total marketing spend was 16 per cent lower at £334 million. In the UK, Smirnoff vodka, Bell's whisky and Gordon's gin all declined.

Improved marketing at its Guinness brewing arm paid off with a 13 per cent rise in profits to £149 million, with draught Guinness volumes in the UK rising 3 per cent. However, profits at Burger King were flat as the closure of some of its US units counter-

balanced a 3.5 per cent rise in same-store sales.

The problems in Pillsbury's North American food business, where intense competition resulted in a 4 per cent volume decline, led to a 3 per cent drop in divisional profits to £263 million, compared with a 14 per cent uplift last year. Mr Yea said one-off factors such as higher cream costs would fade in the second half and trading was expected to improve.

Tempus, page 30

QMH to consider action on debts

By DOMINIC WALSH

QUEENS MOAT HOUSES, the four-star hotel operator, is actively looking at ways of refinancing part of its £800 million debt mountain, although it is intent on avoiding issuing fresh equity.

The debts have come down from £1.4 billion since QMH was on the brink of collapse in 1993, but a further refinancing of £180 million of senior-term debt was always inevitable before the end of 2000. While issuing new shares is one of the options, the group is considering accessing the European debt markets.

Andrew Coppel, chief executive, said: "The more progress we make, the more options become available. The equity route is not our preferred route and not at these prices. We've spent six years trying to avoid massive shareholder dilution so why start now?"

Queens Moat yesterday reported a 71 per cent jump in profits before tax and exceptional in 1998 to £33.5 million from like-for-like sales up 6.4 per cent to £375.3 million. Trading profits in the UK rose 11.4 per cent, with room occupancy flat at 73 per cent and average room rates 5.2 per cent higher at £56.31.

Mr Coppel said that its businesses in Germany and The Netherlands had also performed strongly, and would continue to do so in 1999, although growth was slowing in the UK.

The protracted case for wrongful dismissal brought by four former directors, on which a judgment is expected soon, has so far cost the company more than £6 million.

Chorion pays dividend as it returns to profit

By DOMINIC WALSH

CHORION, the leisure group formerly known as Trocadero, bounced back into the black last year and will pay a dividend for the first time since John Conlan and Nick Tamblin took the helm in July 1997.

The group reported a pre-tax profit of £3.02 million compared with a write-down hit £31.6 million loss in 1997. Earnings per share reached 0.48p compared with a loss per share of 6.80p. Shareholders will get a dividend of 0.1p "reflect-

ing the substantial turnaround in the company's performance and the board's confidence in the future".

The new bars division made a contribution of £2.1 million in the nine months since it was acquired by Chorion, well ahead of expectations.

Its £3 million Tiger Tiger venue, which opened in London's Haymarket in November, has traded so strongly that the group has accelerated plans to roll out the concept. Four new units in Lon-

don are in the pipeline, and terms have been agreed for sites in Croydon, Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham.

Its intellectual property division, which owns the copyright to the works of Enid Blyton and Agatha Christie, lifted operating profits by 60 per cent to £3.2 million. A further 25 Noddy in Toyland programmes are now in production and Chorion has signed an agreement to develop the Noddy brand with BBC Worldwide.

John Lewis adds to retail gloom

By FRASER NELSON

JOHN LEWIS took its turn to give warning about more hard times on the high street yesterday as it returned a 17 per cent decrease in annual profits.

Sir Stuart Hampson, chairman, said the company had been badly hit by a retail downturn that had left its 23 department stores in the "red". He said: "This is a moment when it is pleasant to look back than forward. This is a year for taking every week as it comes. I foresee a sticky few months ahead."

Its department store sales were frozen at £1.75 billion for

the year to January 30. The 120 Waitrose supermarkets saw sales rise to £1.73 billion (£1.67 billion).

A 3.2 per cent increase in costs left trading profit at £225 million (£272 million) before a £35.5 million VAT refund. This left £89 million for its staff bonus, which averages at £2,280 per person.

In the next few weeks, John Lewis department stores will start trading at the Bluewater shopping complex in Kent and Glasgow. Two further stores are under construction in Southampton and Solihull.

French trump Amey to bag Servisair

By PAUL ARMSTRONG

A FRENCH airport services company has trumped Amey Group's attempted hostile takeover of Servisair, the baggage-handling company.

Servisair said yesterday that it had agreed to a cash offer of 230p a share from Penauille Polyservices, representing a 15 per cent premium to Amey's offer.

Brian Staples, chief executive of Amey, an outsourcing group, said his company would not lift its bid and was fair value. Penauille's offer represents a 98 per cent premium to the

Servisair said Penauille had received irrevocable undertakings to accept the bid from holders of 41.4 per cent of the shares. Brokers for Penauille are understood to have secured another 7 per cent on the stock market yesterday.

Servisair shares closed 24½p higher at 231p.

John Willis, Servisair chairman, said Penauille's £94 million offer was significantly higher than Amey's bid and was fair value.

Penauille's offer represents a 98 per cent premium to the

price at which Servisair shares were trading shortly before it revealed in December that it was in takeover talks.

Servisair had rejected Amey's offer on the grounds that it failed to recognise the profit growth that would flow from the company's strong position in European markets.

Mr Willis said Servisair had spoken to several potential bidders in the past two months but added that he did not expect any other offers to emerge.

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MICHAEL CLARK

of the US and now the speculators are waiting to see if Rodia's French company, will come back with an offer of as much as 180p a share.

Elsewhere in the sector, Kalon surged 73½p to 130p on reports that Total of France, the majority shareholder, may bid for the rest of the shares it does not already own.

Laporte was chased up 47½p to 632½p ahead of results on Monday. Profits are likely to be uninspiring but the market will want to know the impact of the new management has made.

Scapa rose a further 24p to 113½p on revived talk of a bid.

British Fittings advanced 8½p to 113½p after announcing it was in receipt of another bid approach. A management buyout plan is said to be ready to make

Albright & Wilson held steady at 140½p after results earlier this week. The chemical specialist has a bid on the table of 130p from Albemarle

Speculative buying hoisted AIM-listed Stentor 8p to 26p in thin trading. Talk is that several potential bidders are stalking the shares, having seen the price of the loss-making company slump from a peak of 196½p since last October. Earlier this month, the price was just 6½p.

Servisair continued to gather pace with a jump of 24½p to 231p

In the futures pit, the June series of the long gilt rose 35p to £116.54 on turnover of 27,000 contracts. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 rose 67p to £145.55, while Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 13p better at £106.43.

□ **NEW YORK:** Oil shares and optimism about the US economy drove the Dow Jones industrial average over the 9,900 mark. By midday the index was up 14.81 at 9,914.65.

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	5914.65 (+141.81)
S&P Composite	1303.39 (+16.55)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	15502.14 (+22.142)
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	10682.81 (+86.20)
Amsterdam:	
ASE Index	529.56 (+6.82)
Sydney:	
ASX	2580.05 (+19.11)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	4754.41 (+33.00)
Singapore:	
SEAC	1471.73 (+22.20)
Brussels:	
BEL20	3302.18 (+24.84)
Paris:	
CAC-40	4184.38 (+22.07)
Zurich:	
SMI Index	7322.5 (+113.2)
London:	
FT 30	3841.5 (+26.41)
FTSE 100	3283.3 (+44.21)
FTSE 250	5403.3 (+45.13)
FTSE Europe	3006.9 (+46.5)
FTSE Europe 100	2814.33 (+48.37)
FTSE Asia	2914.34 (+42.53)
FTSE New Frontiers	2554.4 (+37.42)
FTSE Food Index	152.74 (+0.36)
FTSE Tech Index	119.04 (+1.36)
Berlin:	
DAX	4694.6
SEAC Volume	1345.9K
US\$	1.8295 (-4.007)
£/DM	0.6880 (-0.0072)
£/SFR	1.1745
Exchange Index:	
Asia on England official close (Jan 1987)	133.03 (+0.8)
FX	
JPY	161.8 Jan 12/4 Jan 1987 = 100

Axon Group	254	...
Close Bros Dev VCT	100	...
Enhanced Zero Trust	100%	- 1/4
Gender Properties	7 1/2	...
Jupiter En Zero Dv Pt	106%	- 1/2
Jupiter Enhanced Inc	100	+ 1/4
Lumina Warrants	275	- 3/4
NBA Quantum	110	...
Sports Internet	136 1/2	+ 1
Synovet	127	+ 1

Brancole n/p (10)	1	...
Oxford Biomedica n/p (15)	3	1

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng
M & G	2450	+662 $\frac{1}{2}$	37.0
Crestline	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	+3 $\frac{1}{2}$	+21.8
Euro Leisure	39 $\frac{1}{2}$	+21	+52.8
OS Grp	28 $\frac{1}{2}$	+5	+21.2
Chryslr	28 $\frac{1}{2}$	+15 $\frac{1}{2}$	+53.5
Range	21 $\frac{1}{2}$	+26 $\frac{1}{2}$	+124
Pfizer	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	+1	+13.0
EPRI	35 $\frac{1}{2}$	+42 $\frac{1}{2}$	+140
General Agency	25	3	+12
SOCO Int'l	35	+3	+12.9
Techlog Tech	15 $\frac{1}{2}$	+1	+7.7
Monument	42 $\frac{1}{2}$	+4 $\frac{1}{2}$	+12.5
Europacorp	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	+1	+12.5
Chryslr	138 $\frac{1}{2}$	+15	+10.9
Scholar	1440	+158	+12.3
Keller	238 $\frac{1}{2}$	+25	+12.2
Sanisat	23 $\frac{1}{2}$	+24 $\frac{1}{2}$	+118
Amstar	238 $\frac{1}{2}$	+25	+11.7
Amstar	494 $\frac{1}{2}$	+50	+11.7
Bf Barnes	130	+13	+11.1
Lon Slot Bk	128	+13 $\frac{1}{2}$	+10.8
Yorkville	62	+6	+10.7
Watford	62	+6	+10.7
Comstock Trust	163	+16	+9.8
Friends Army Sme182	182	+17	+9.2
BP Amoco	1021 $\frac{1}{2}$	+92	+8.6
Indotek Int'l	84 $\frac{1}{2}$	+7 $\frac{1}{2}$	+9.7

FALLS:			
Stock	Close	Chng	Chng
Molins	112 $\frac{1}{2}$	-30	-21.0
FSV Dev	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	-2 $\frac{1}{2}$	-15.0
Chryslr	21 $\frac{1}{2}$	-3 $\frac{1}{2}$	-15.0
Chryslr Hldgs	51	-7 $\frac{1}{2}$	-14.7
Water Hall	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	-1 $\frac{1}{2}$	-10.0
Janitor Corp	75	-8	-9.6
Com Incoex	156 $\frac{1}{2}$	-16	-9.2
Towry Law	458	-50	-11.2
Wmco	88 $\frac{1}{2}$	-7 $\frac{1}{2}$	-8.8

Canary poised to fly

The attraction of Canary Wharf boils down to your view of the value of future development. Canary Wharf's valuers came up with two figures. The traditional UK open market

This is good news. It leaves Canary shares conservatively priced and investors with plenty to play for. Institutional investors should certainly take a slice. Private individuals — who are not being offered shares in the placing — should also buy, unless the stock races to an immediate, large premium.

REED International lost nearly 6 per cent of its value yesterday. Perhaps this was unsurprising since the annual results were uninspiring and the outlook for the current year was sketched as being as flat as a pancake. But this was known, and Reed took its hammering in December when the publisher issued a

No, yesterday's sell-off was sparked by the lack of real news. The near-6 per cent fall in the share price was exaggerated because shares in Reed — the UK-quoted vehicle for the Anglo Dutch publisher called Reed Elsevier — have run up strongly since the New Year (and since it was tipped as a Tempus share of the year). But the non-appointment of a new chief executive did the damage.

It sounds trite to state that this most pressing management issue must be resolved be-

THE sheer size and geographical spread of Diageo's four businesses makes interpreting its figures an invidious pursuit. But the positives outweigh the negatives, albeit marginally. Even in Asia, where spirits and beer took a hammering, the tide appears to have turned.

The main issue centres now on tackling Pillsbury, the performance of which gives cause for concern in the face of intense competition in its US heartland. Diageo's biggest division, spirits and wine, lifted profits by 4 per cent, with North America up an impressive 17 per cent. A 3.5 per cent rise in same-store sales at Burger King counterbalanced a one-off £6 million hit from the closure of 17 company-managed units in the US. Meanwhile, a big increase in marketing investment in the Guinness brand was reflected in a 5 per cent rise in volumes.

Adam Spielman at Salomon Smith Barney has pencilled in earnings per share of 34.7p, putting its shares on a multiple of 21 times. Although fears that LVMH may sell its 11 per cent stake have restrained share price growth, rapidly improving cashflow and a string of disposals make share buybacks almost inevitable. Hold.

Electra

EVEN the most gung-ho investors should now look for an exit from Electra Investment Trust, for at least part of their holdings.

There is a chance — emphatically endorsed by the Electra. board — that those who hang on will receive more than the 78¢ that was laid on the table yesterday in a tender offer.

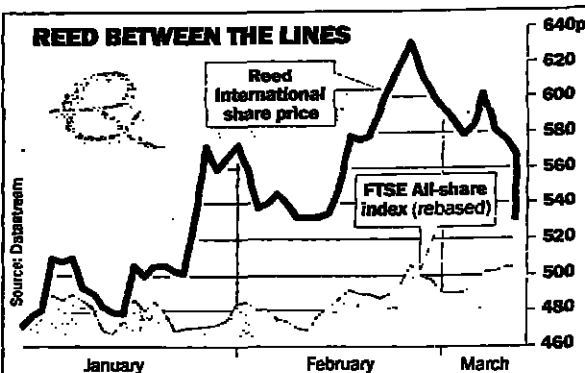
But beware Greeks bearing gifts. The debt that the trust is taking on to fund the tender will be a mighty millstone going forward. The challenge in realising cash from unquoted

investments should not be underestimated. Moreover, economic conditions in the five-year liquidation period may not be as conducive to unquoted sales as they are at present. Electra shares will drop to a big discount as soon as the tender is complete.

The best outcome for Electra investors would be to see 3i come back with an offer at or near 78p. But given 3i's reticence thus far it seems unlikely that they will pay that much.

Cautious investors should sell in the market now. Electra stock has performed well and shareholders should be sitting on a nice profit. If you are more adventurous you may care to stay involved, but be sure to tender for at least your full entitlement in the tender offer. There could be a tasty long-term upside but the accompanying downside risk means that you should reduce your exposure.

EDITED BY ROBERT COLE



CRUDE OIL (Siberian FOB)				GULF LONDON GRAIN FUTURES			
CISCOIL OILS (Siberian FOB)				LIFFE WHEAT		LIFFE BAIRLEY	
				(June 87)		(June 87)	
Brent Forward	12 10	-0.78		May	73.50	May	74.50
Brent 15 days (May)	12 08	-0.65		Jun	73.50	Jun	74.50
Brent 1 month (May)	12 06	-0.65		Jul	73.50	Jul	74.50
Brent 3 months (May)	12 00	-0.70		Aug	73.50	Aug	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Sep	73.50	Sep	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Oct	73.50	Oct	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Nov	73.50	Nov	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Dec	73.50	Dec	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Jan	73.50	Jan	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Feb	73.50	Feb	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Mar	73.50	Mar	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Apr	73.50	Apr	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		May	73.50	May	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Jun	73.50	Jun	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Jul	73.50	Jul	74.50
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W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Sep	73.50	Sep	74.50
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W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		May	73.50	May	74.50
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W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		May	73.50	May	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Jun	73.50	Jun	74.50
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W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Dec	73.50	Dec	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Jan	73.50	Jan	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Feb	73.50	Feb	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Mar	73.50	Mar	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Apr	73.50	Apr	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		May	73.50	May	74.50
W. Coast Intermediate	14 00	-0.55		Jun	73.50	Jun	

[illegible]

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sell	Vol	Open Int
Long GR	Mar 99	115.61	116.00	115.54	115.95	20	8053
	Jun 99	116.03	117.30	116.00	116.18	35962	7597
5-Year GR	Mar 99				108.23	0	63
	Jun 99				107.93	0	0
Italian Govt Bond	Mar 99	112.37	113.48	112.23	112.65	13832	37354
Japanese Govt Bond	Jun 99	130.80	130.99	130.72			7819
3-Mth Sterling	Mar 99	94.540	94.550	94.540	94.545	11435	158996
	Jun 99	94.790	94.850	94.780	94.829	29878	182763
	Sep 99	94.800	94.910	94.800	94.870	29494	168984
3-Mth Euro	Mar 99	95.500	95.970	95.385	95.645	24312	128571
	Jun 99	97.165	97.165	97.060	97.100	65948	154945
	Sep 99	97.090	97.170	97.075	97.085	69660	139525
3-Mth Euro	Mar 99	96.865	96.970	96.845	96.885	6145	91948
	Jun 99	97.000	97.100	96.980	97.020	80117	18117
3-Mth Euro	Mar 99	95.620	96.210	95.670	95.870	12105	150145
	Jun 99	95.580	96.000	95.550	95.570	13036	74780
3-Mth Euro Libor	Mar 99	95.325	95.935	95.825	95.945	1778	114282
	Jun 99	97.560	97.690	97.580	97.590	282	108633
	Sep 99	97.685	97.800	97.670	97.685	284	94
	Dec 99	96.865	96.925	96.855	96.875	18	84929
	Mar 00	96.595	96.655	96.585	96.595	156	53816
FTSE 100	Mar 99	6280.0	6400.0	6260.0	6400.0	42070	156700
	Jun 99	6321.0	6440.0	6321.5	6382.0	6117	48005

Prime Rate: Clearing Base 5%	Futures House 5				
Discount Market Loans: Overnight 1%	Low 5				Week End 5 1/2
Treasury Bills (Dial):	2 mth 5 1/4	3 mth 5	6 mth 4 3/4	12 mth 4 1/2	
Prime Bank Bills (Dial):	1 mth 5 1/4	2 mth 5 1/4	3 mth 5 1/4	6 mth 5 1/4	12 mth 5 1/4
Starting Money Rate:	5 1/4-5 1/2	5 1/4-5 1/2	5 1/4-5 1/2	5 1/4-5 1/2	5 1/4-5 1/2
Interbank:	5 1/4-5 1/2	5 1/4-5 1/2	5 1/4-5 1/2	5 1/4-5 1/2	5 1/4-5 1/2
Overnight open 5% close 5 1/4					
Local Authority Depos:		n/a	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
Starting CD's:	5 1/4-5 1/2	5 1/4-5 1/2	5 1/4-5 1/2	5 1/4-5 1/2	5 1/4-5 1/2

Currency	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth	Gold
Dollar:	4-4 1/4	5-4 1/4	5-4 1/4	5-6 1/4	5-4
Sterling:	3-2 1/4	3-2 1/4	3-2 1/4	3-2 1/4	3-2 1/4
Yen:	1-1 1/4	1-1 1/4	1-1 1/4	1-1 1/4	36-36 1/2
Franc:	1-1	1-1 1/4	1-1 1/4	1-1 1/4	1-10 1/2
Mark:	1-1	1-1 1/4	1-1 1/4	1-1 1/4	5-6 1/4

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

London: Open: \$293.10-293.50 Close: \$293.60-294.30 High: \$294.00-294.50
 Low: \$292.00-293.50 AM: \$293.80 PM: \$294.00

Frankfurt: \$294.50-296.50 (180.75-182.75)

Hamburg: \$369.00 (\$226.65) Silver: \$5.31 (\$3.266) Palladium: \$348.00 (\$214.35)

Rate Factors for March 11	Range	Close	1 month	3 Month
Open/pen	11.058 - 11.171	11.151 - 11.154	1-yr	3-yr
Euro	1.5008 - 1.5023	1.5010 - 1.5026	0.12 - 0.15%	0.37 - 0.40%
London	2.4686 - 2.4626	2.4624 - 2.4776	0.12 - 0.05%	0.23 - 0.14%
New York	1.6226 - 1.6292	1.6282 - 1.6272	0.065 - 0.05%	0.178 - 0.147%
Sterling	1.6784 - 1.7296	1.7260 - 1.7295	1-yr	3-yr
Stockholm	13.167 - 13.303	13.269 - 13.294	1-yr	3-yr
Yen - Tokyo	195.20 - 195.42	195.70 - 195.42	1-yr	2-yr
Yen - Zurich	2.3777 - 2.3956	2.3922 - 2.3956	1-yr	2-yr

Source: Ecol

Premium = a Discount = b

Australia	1.5772-1.5785
Canada	1.5232-1.5242
Denmark	6.8516-6.8556
Euro	0.9224-0.9225
Hong Kong	7.7487-7.7497
Japan	120.29-120.34
Malaysia	3.7998-3.8002
Norway	7.8435-7.8495
Singapore	1.7363-1.7373
Sweden	8.1550-8.1650
Switzerland	1.4702-1.4712

Argentine peso	1.6250-1.6350
Australia dollar	2.5650-2.5686
Bahran dinar	0.0600-0.6202
Brazil real	3.05-3.06
Cyprus pound	0.8515-0.8703
Euro	1.5013-1.5014
Finland markka	8.7670-8.9061
Greece drachma	472.25-482.25
Hong Kong dollar	12.6071-12.6126
Indonesian Rupiah	68.22-69.82
Indonesia rupiah	14526.0-15426.0
Kuwait dirar	0.4895-0.5009
Malaysia ringgit	1.6880-1.924
New Zealand dollar	3.0502-3.0584
Pakistan rupee	79.75 Ptas
Saudi Arabia riyal	5.8500-5.9874
Singapore dollar	2.8268-2.8301
South Africa rand (corn)	3.9850-10.1038
S & A dirham	5.9025-6.0411

Barclays Treasury * Loyds Bank

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Wembley deal was a funny old game

Jason Nissé on the winners and losers in the battle for the Twin Towers

When the name Wembley is mentioned, emotions run high. People remember Bert Trautmann struggling on in goal for Manchester City with a broken neck in the 1956 FA Cup Final. Geoff Hurst scoring a hat-trick for England in the 1966 World Cup final or Gareth Southgate's penalty being saved in the Euro 96 semi-final. That is why, when business decisions come to be made about Wembley Stadium, normal rules of commerce seem to go out of the window.

Shareholders in Wembley plc, the company which has owned the stadium for the past decade-and-a-half, yesterday voted to sell their prized asset to the English National Stadium Development Company (ENSDC) — a subsidiary of the Football Association — for £103 million. The decision was greeted with joy at Lancaster Gate, the FA's headquarters,

which has been a bit short of good news, having seen the reigns of its chairman, chief executive and national team manager all end in quick succession. The FA has always said the redevelopment of Wembley is key to England's bid to host the 2006 World Cup and has threatened to take England matches away from the stadium if the company did not sell.

But the deal was opposed by three of Wembley's non-executive directors — Roger Brooke, the highly respected chairman of Cardover Investments; Peter Mead, the founder of the advertising group Abbot Mead Vickers and deputy chairman of Millwall; and Jarvis Astaire, the promoter and agent who has been involved with Wembley for longer than anyone involved in the

story. They argued that it made no sense for a company that owns a whole series of assets around the stadium — including an indoor arena and a conference centre — to sell the centrepiece and give up any rights to managing the stadium. Wembley would end up like a doughnut with a hole in the middle, as it were.

The trio approached two potential bidders, Enic, the sports investment company, and SFX, the US stadium management group. Both wanted Wembley to keep an interest in the stadium, even if it was only on a management contract. They believed the £150 million budgeted cost of rebuilding the stadium — a move that would involve demolishing the famous twin towers — looked excessive. The bids these companies said they might make for Wem-

Crunch time for UB's new Frenchman

Fraser Nelson reports on the man given the task of lifting United Biscuits out of the market mire

When Napoleon was choosing his generals, the first question he would ask was "has he luck?" His idea was that, regardless of education, lucky generals tended to win the battles.

United Biscuits has chosen to replace Eric Nicoli, its EMI-bound chief executive, with Leslie van de Walle for exactly this reason. "This man is our version of Arsene Wenger, the Arsenal manager," Colin Short, the UB chairman, said yesterday. "He is also, in Napoleonic terms, a very lucky general."

M van de Walle's CV does nothing to contradict this assertion. He was born and raised in Paris, and his luck began when he spent his French national service in South Carolina selling French exports to the Americans. "I had completed an MBA," he says. "When you have an MBA, you have two options in the Army: you can do military service or commerce. I am of very slight build, I cannot run very fast and I'm not a good shot. So they decided I would be of better use to my country trying to sell French bread and French hats."

His first industry job was in the sales and marketing department of Danone. From there he moved to Cadbury Schweppes, where he was swiftly promoted through the ranks of marketing director, commercial director and business development director.

In 1994 he joined United Biscuits as head of its European snacks division. Within a year, he was head of continental Europe and in March last year he was promoted to the UB board as head of McVities.

Since joining UB he has been a Londoner. "I've lived in London for four-and-a-half years, but you wouldn't think it from my accent. I live in the same place all the French live in London — South Kensington. My children go to the French school there, and they love it."

Soon after joining UB, Mr Nicoli began grooming him to become chief executive. "UB asked me if I would be interested some time ago. For the last three years, I started going in with them to the results. But it is one thing to be prepared for a job and another to actually do it."

How M&G attracted an offer that it just could not refuse

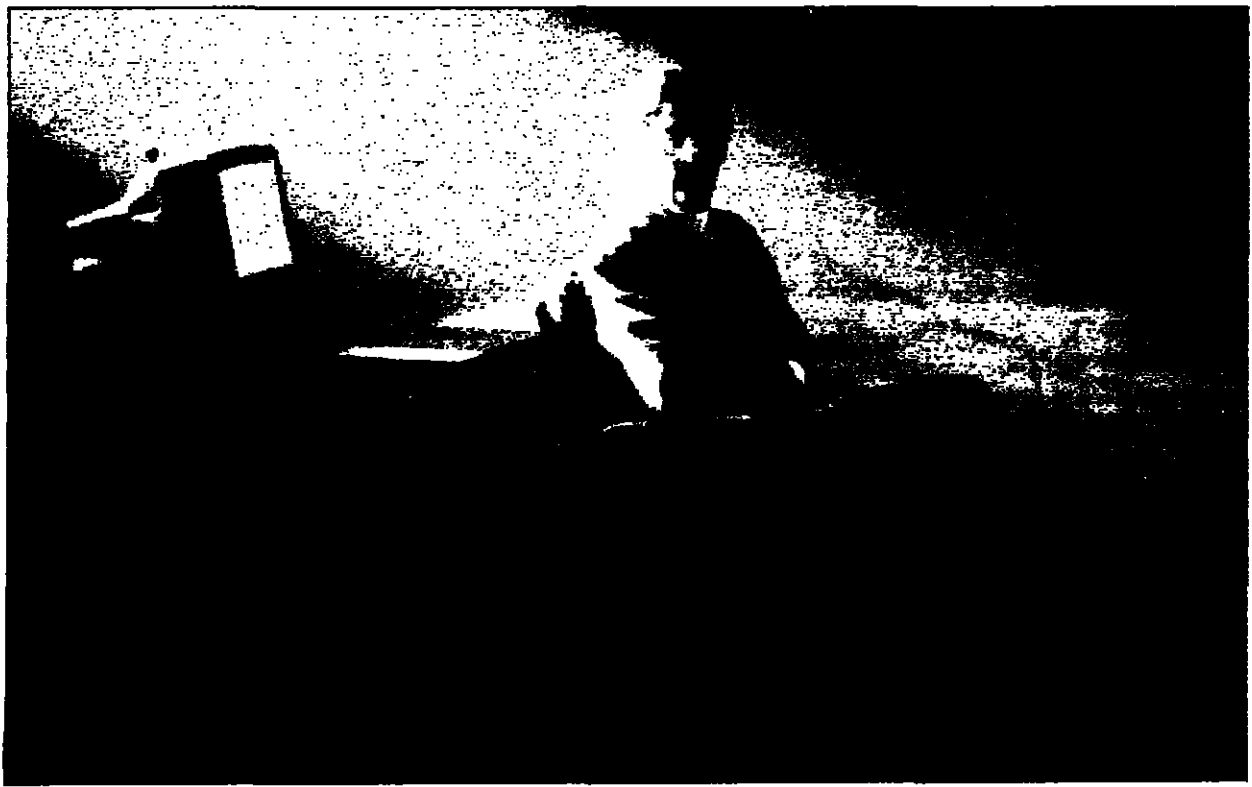
Paul Durman reports on the transformation that attracted Prudential's generous bid

City takeover documents routinely include sections for the acquiring company and its target to explain their motives for entering into a deal. Even by the coy standards of such documents, M&G Group's formal comments yesterday were unusually evasive about its real reason for recommending the £1.9 billion offer from Prudential Corporation.

But it scarcely had to spell it out: the life insurer is paying a shedload of money for Britain's oldest unit trust company. John Fairbairn, nephew of M&G's founder and the chairman of the Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust, which still owns a third of M&G, was more plain-speaking. "The price," he said, "is very, very good." Independent observers agreed. "It's an extremely high price," said Roman Chayin, an analyst at Merrill Lynch. Concern that Prudential has overpaid prompted its shares to fall by 2 per cent in a strongly rising market.

Prudential's offer of £25 a share is more than two-and-a-half times M&G's low during the crisis in world markets last autumn. The Pru is paying the equivalent of 10 per cent of the £185 million of savings that M&G manages — a very high multiple by historical standards. To put it another way, the deal puts a £1.9 million price on the head of each of M&G's 1,000 staff.

This is a personal triumph for Michael McLintock, who is not 35 until later this month but has led a shake-up of M&G over the past two years. When he took over as managing director, M&G was in the unfamiliar position of being unpopular. Investors and independent financial advisers



M&G's reputation sagged to such an extent that even Lord Lawson of Blaby, the former Chancellor, failed to tempt investors

were shunning its funds. A few headlines from *The Times* tell the tale: "Performance left wanting at M&G", "A strategy of poor value for investors", "Can M&G come back?".

For years M&G was regarded as one of the most solid and dependable companies in the industry it created. Its investment funds — which eschewed the riskier names favoured by younger rivals — might not be at the very top of the performance tables, but they had delivered consistent long-term results. The company's dull but effective press and poster advertising hammered home the message that investing in shares produced much better returns than leaving your money in a building society.

The growth in its funds through the 1980s and early 1990s was built on the value investment philosophy. It sought out shares that were cheap on the basis of their assets or earnings, and laid particular emphasis on those paying high dividends. But, as

Phillips & Drew and other value disciplines know to their cost, in the mid-1990s this approach ceased to work. Investors placed an increasing premium on growth stocks in areas such as pharmaceuticals and telecommunications, and turned their backs on the small companies in older industries where M&G had so much of its money.

M&G performance sagged badly and its reputation went with it. The extent of the damage became painfully clear when the firm launched a high-income personal equity plan that drew only £20 million of new money despite it being backed by expensive television advertising. Featuring Lord Lawson of Blaby, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, in its heyday M&G could attract ten times as much money into new funds almost without trying.

Mr McLintock set about changing M&G's tried but failing methods. A profusion of similar funds was rationalised. A market-tracking fund was introduced — anathema to dyed-in-the-wool stock pickers. And although the fundamental value approach was retained, it was modified to ensure that the whole of M&G's business would not again be exposed to a change in investment fashions.

At the same time, Mr McLintock was under pressure from the Esmée Fairbairn trust, As one of Britain's wealthiest charities, it had decided it could no longer justify having all its money tied up in a single company and was looking for an opportunity to diversify its investments. With such a large stake in M&G effectively up for sale, the fund manager's independence was increasingly called into question.

Mr Fairbairn rejects the notion that Mr McLintock was given an 18-month ultimatum to turn the firm around. He acknowledges that there was an unspoken deadline because of "our desire to find an escape route. He asked for some time because M&G needed a revamp. They've done a very good job."

Misconduct

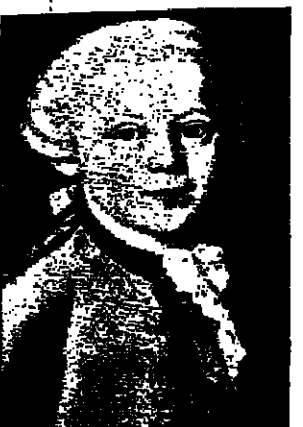
ONE fund manager faces a nervous ten-day wait, because Nicholas Hely-Hutchinson, of Singer & Friedlander, makes his debut as a conductor at Clifford Chance, the solicitors, on March 23. It is part of a programme by London Music, a small orchestra that is embarking on a series of concerts at various City institutions.

The project is run by Mark Stephenson, a musician and conductor who realised that many of the spectacular buildings scattered around the Square Mile were ideal for music, and that there were plenty

of amateur conductors available too.

Hely-Hutchinson is the first such. He will receive coaching from Stephenson to make sure he is up to scratch and then debut with part of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*.

"If this works, it will be a triumph of enthusiasm over talent," he says, admitting only to playing piano "modestly" up to now. London Music so far has limited itself to low-key events but is about to sign a deal with a big City institution. Expect them at your local atrium soon.



Mozart: musical genius to get an enthusiastic airing

A TELLING vignette at United Biscuits. Leslie van de Walle, incoming chief executive, is asked if there will be any more board changes. Eric Nicoli, whom he is replacing, starts shaking his head. Colin Short, chairman, chips in to say, yes, there will be new blood among the non-executives. Nicoli stops shaking his head and starts nodding instead.

Nicoli is, of course, joining EMI. Long-suffering UB shareholders may be interested to learn his musical tastes tend towards the blues. Woke up this morning/My share price was way down on the floor.



Smallprint

EMBARRASSING, the things you have to admit when you host a company. Tucked away at the end of the Canary Wharf prospectus is the news that the company may be prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive. This is over the death of an employee of a subcontractor last March who fell from a steel staircase while not wearing a safety harness.

Of rather less import, but showing just how ludicrously exhaustive the disclosure requirements have become, is the entry for Sir Martin Jacob, the senior non-executive.

He is a director of both Marks & Spencer and The Telegraph, and the document duly lists four minor offences

the two have notched up involving incorrect pricing or advertising. The earliest dates from 1990.

Bugged

STILL down at the Wharf, elsewhere in the prospectus there is a warning about the millennium bug, and a long description of the work carried out so far debugging the security systems, the lifts and whatever. More than £500,000 spent upgrading the core financial system, for example, some of this on bug catching.

At the end of the note is the following: "There can be no assurance that the steps taken... will successfully eliminate or minimise vulnerabilities of its software and systems," or that any problems will not have a "material adverse effect" on Canary Wharf. I ask what the point is of inserting such a meaningless piece of reassurance to investors. The reply is curt: "Lawyers."

JEFF HAMBLIN, chief executive of the British Tourist Authority, used to run the US office. He has recalled some of the odder questions from potential visitors to this country. Such as "When is the Edinburgh Festival on in London?" "When is the next performance of the Puccini Circus?" And my favourite: "Are the Cotswolds open on Sundays?"

Ad enough


AN END to the "Dinnergate" scandal involving Saatchi & Saatchi and the New Zealand Prime Minister, Jenny Shipley, which has gripped that country since Kevin Roberts, Saatchi's chief executive, had dinner with her.

Saatchi then won a massive increase in work from the New Zealand Tourist Board. I learn that Shipley, like all good politicians, has wriggled out of it. But Saatchi has been fired for coming up with proposals that "required a level of funding outside our budget". Teach you not to be so greedy.


MARTIN WALLER
city.diary@the-times.co.uk



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Rexam to complete disposals by year end

By PAUL ARMSTRONG

REXAM is set to finish shedding its non-core assets by the end of this year, raising a further "several hundred million pounds" in the process, Rolf Börjesson, chief executive, said yesterday.

Mr Börjesson said Rexam planned to sell its printing operations and most of its building and engineering interests as the last stage of its 2½-year campaign to focus solely on paper and packaging.

He would not be more specific about the likely proceeds, but said the sales would leave the company with interest cover of almost seven times.

Mr Börjesson was speaking after Rexam announced a pre-tax profit of £182 million (£179 million) for 1998.

Rexam said the economic difficulties in Asia and Brazil had taken their toll of several of its operations and trading so far this year had followed the pattern of late last year.

A final dividend of 8p was declared, leaving the year's payout at 14.1p.

Mr Börjesson said the sale of the remaining non-strategic assets would leave Rexam with packaging operations in food, beverage, health and beauty products and a coded film and papers division.

The surplus from these disposals will, he said, be used to fund bolt-on acquisitions in these sectors rather than one-off major purchases.

But Mr Börjesson warned investors that they should not expect future growth rates of 10 or 20 per cent, saying that the packaging industry offered steady but stable returns.

"A couple of per cent growth year after year is what you can expect," he said. "There is growth in packaging, but it is not the magnitude of telecommunications."

Rexam shares closed 2p lower at 202½p.

Total to buy out Kalon

By MARTIN BARROW

SHARES in Kalon Group, the UK paint-maker, rose 7½p to 130p yesterday after the company revealed that Total, the French oil and chemicals group, was considering taking full control of the business.

Total owns 63 per cent of Kalon, the legacy of a 1995 deal in which Kalon merged with Euridip. Total's paint arm.

Under the original deal, Total made a cash injection of £61 million to acquire a controlling stake in the merged venture. At the heart of the agreement was a plan to cut costs and improve the efficiency of the business, particularly in France.

Kalon shares peaked at 193p last year, but slumped to just 85p in October, reflecting difficult trading conditions. In 1997 the company earned pre-tax profits of £45.1 million on turnover of £472 million.



Börjesson: bolt-on deals



SIG, Europe's top supplier of insulation productions, struck a cautious note yesterday, saying that the UK market is likely to come under further price pressure and the German market will remain difficult (Robert Lea writes). For 1998 the Sheffield-based company — led by Bill Forrester, above, the chief executive — reported pre-tax profits of £37.5 million, up £2.1 million on turnover up

18 per cent at £795 million. Earnings per share were 20.1p (20p), while the final dividend is 5.6p, making a total of 8.4p, a rise of over 7 per cent. The shares, weak of late, rose 2p to 181p.

Meggitt remains upbeat

By ADAM JONES

MEGGITT, the aerospace and oil industry engineer, yesterday said that it was well equipped to cope with a likely fall in orders from Boeing.

Demand from Boeing, a customer for Meggitt seals and cockpit clocks, is expected to peak this year, Mike Stacey, the Meggitt chief executive, said orders from small jet makers, plus military aircraft business, would still be lucrative.

He said the low oil price would mean a quiet year for Hestric, which makes heat exchangers for the oil and gas industry. Meggitt can afford to spend up to £50 million on acquisitions in areas such as aerospace.

Meggitt was announcing 1998 profits of £35.4 million, up from £31.5 million in 1997. Sales rose 11 per cent to £293.9 million. Diluted earnings per share rose from 9.3p to 10.2p. The final dividend is 3.53p, making 5.15p for the year, up 10 per cent on last year.

European sees shares jump as offer is unveiled

By DOMINIC WALSH

SHARES in European Leisure jumped more than 25 per cent yesterday after the cue sports and nightclubs group unveiled the terms of its planned merger with Allied Leisure, the ten-pin bowling and Burger King restaurants operator.

Although the deal is being couched as a merger, in practice it will involve Allied acquiring its rival for £35.4 million and Allied's directors assuming the top jobs. The combined group will have a market capitalisation of £68.1 million, with European shareholders emerging with 52 per cent of the shares.

Under the terms of the offer, European shareholders will receive 361 new Allied shares for every 100 shares held, valuing European at about 90p a share — a premium of 46.7 per cent to the price before the two parties admitted they were in talks on

February 22. European's share price reacted with a 19p rise to 92½p, while Allied was unchanged at 27½p.

Neil Goulden and Martin Scott, respectively chief executive and finance director of Allied, will assume the same posts in the merged board. Their counterparts at European, Ian Rock and Patrick Hooper, are expected to have their two-year contracts paid off. The chairman will be Victor Steel, currently chairman of European.

In the half-year to December 31, European reported a rise in operating profits from continuing operations from £3.19 million to £3.31 million, and the interim dividend is 1.4p (1.25p). In the same period, Allied lifted operating profits from £2.21 million to £2.53 million. The dividend is 0.33p (0.35p).

Gokal loses appeal

By SAEED SHAH

ABBAS GOKAL, the Pakistani shipping tycoon, lost his appeal yesterday to overturn his conviction for the fraud that led to the spectacular collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International.

Lord Justice Christopher Rose, in a ruling at the Court of Appeal, said the evidence that saw Gokal, 62, sent to prison in 1997 for 14 years on two counts of conspiracy was "overwhelming" and that he was at the heart of a highly sophisticated fraud "with international consequences of great gravity".

Gokal had been found guilty of syphoning \$1.2 billion out of BCCI. Gokal's Gulf Group, a Middle East shipping company, was the biggest borrower from BCCI. Gokal appealed on grounds of how he was brought into UK jurisdiction, having been extradited from Germany after being arrested in 1994 in Frankfurt, as his flight from Pakistan to the US stopped for refuelling.

EU cuts £8m from British Steel fine

A £22.4 MILLION fine imposed on British Steel by the European Commission was reduced by more than £8 million by European Court judges yesterday. The fine, imposed in 1994 for British Steel's involvement in a price-rigging cartel, was by far the biggest individual penalty out of a total of £72.8 million in fines imposed on 17 European steelmakers.

The European Court of First Instance, which deals with legal challenges to EU competition laws, upheld the Commission's action in fining the steel cartel. It rejected counter-claims that the Commission itself was implicated in market rigging, but agreed to cut the fines. British Steel's £22.4 million penalty was cut to £14 million. The fines were imposed after a Commission inquiry into the EU market in steel beams. Brussels declared that 17 steel firms were operating an illegal cartel, engaging in price fixing, market rigging and exchanging confidential information. The second-highest fine, of £8.5 million, was imposed on a French steel beam manufacturer.

German bank raided

POLICE have raided the head office of HypoVereinsbank, Germany's second-largest bank, in an investigation into the financing of its property investments. The Munich prosecutor launched the inquiry into real estate and accounting irregularities last October, shortly after HypoVereinsbank announced a DM3.5 billion (£2.5 billion) write-off for overvalued assets. These assets were owned by Hypo-Bank, which merged with Vereinsbank, its fellow Munich bank, last year. The dispute has cast a shadow over Germany's biggest banking merger in postwar history.

Davis Service ahead

DAVIS SERVICE GROUP, the laundry and HSS tool-hire company, lifted pre-tax profits for 1998 by 25 per cent, before exceptional items, to £55.2 million on turnover of £407.9 million, up 13 per cent. A final dividend of 8.5p, up from 7.6p, makes a full-year payout of 12.6p (11.33p). Davis said that forecasts for 1999 were difficult because of its range of activities, which are dependent on customer spending that is, in turn, determined by the economy, though current indications are good. The shares rose 25p to 451p, near their record high.

Alcatel plans job cuts

ALCATEL, the French telecoms group, plans to cut 12,000 jobs worldwide over the next two years to achieve cost savings of about £200 million. Serge Tchuruk, Alcatel managing director, announced the cuts along with 1998 results, which showed net profit surging to £2.34 billion (£1.6 billion) from £711 million in 1997. Many of the job losses will be in the US where the group is to shut its Alcatel Data Networks unit. The company's share price plunged almost 40 per cent in a single day last September when M Tchuruk said 1998 results would be worse than expected.

Hemingway profit dip

HEMINGWAY Properties yesterday said that the fall in interest rates makes property a "very good" asset class for investment. However, despite reporting net assets per share up 8 per cent to 35.1p for the year to December 31, 1998, shares in the property investment company yesterday stood at 25½p, up 24p on the day but still off their 12-month high of 49½p. Pre-tax profits fell to £5.2 million, from £7.8 million, because of reduced property sales. A final dividend of 0.47p per share raises the total payment for the year by 10 per cent to 0.67p.

Lamont's lament

FALLING demand, disrupted production and the cost of laying off staff resulted in a drastic fall in profits of Lamont Holdings, the Belfast linen and carpets group. Operating profits came in at just £451,000, against £7.2 million, last year on turnover down by more than 10 per cent to £83 million. Earnings per share, boosted by a property disposal, came in at 4.43p (20.01p). The total dividend for the year falls to 3.65p, from 12.8p. The shares dived 7½p to 51p having fallen about 60 per cent in the past 12 months.

More misery at Molins

THE tale of woe at Molins, the maker of machinery for the tobacco and packaging industries, continued yesterday when, just ten weeks into its new financial year, the company said that it was unlikely that it would be able to match last year's operating profit levels. Reporting losses for 1998 of £6.6 million after restructuring charges of £15.8 million, Michael Orr, chairman, said that with little demand for tobacco machinery, 1999 operating profits would be less than £9.1 million.

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Travis Perkins says housing will pick up

TRAVIS PERKINS, the builder's merchant, expects buyers to return to the new homes market this year (Saeed Shah writes).

Tony Travis, the company's chairman, said: "Most builders expect to see a rising trend in new house sales. The reduction in interest rates that began last October has not yet restored consumer confidence

though there are signs that buyers are returning."

Travis Perkins lifted 1998 pre-tax profits by 22 per cent, to £60.5 million, on sales up by 12.1 per cent, to £623 million. The year's dividend is 12.1p, up from 11.0p. The shares rose 22½p to 466p.

The company's operating margin rose to 9.9 per cent, from 8.5 per cent, last year.

Cattles to expand on high street

By ROBERT LEA

CATTLES, the consumer credit group, is aiming to expand on the high street, taking the place of the retreating retail banks, in an attempt to produce 20 per cent growth this year to match last year's profit rise.

The Yorkshire company is expanding from its roots in weekly door-to-door credit collecting, by opening its Welcome branches at a rate of one a week to try to build a nationwide network over five years. In 1998 the company made pre-tax profits of £47.7 million against £38.9 million excluding prior-year exceptional gains. Eddie Cran, chief executive, said: "Cattles is a growth story. The market expected growth of 15 to 20 per cent. That is what we delivered and that is what we are aiming for this year."

Earnings per share came in at 24.3p against 27.8p. Total receivables in the year grew by more than 40 per cent to £487 million, while provisions for bad debt rose from £18 million to £28 million.

The company is offering one new share for each one held in a bonus issue to halve the share price, in a bid to make the stock more marketable. The shares have raced up from about 200p two years ago to more than 800p last month. Yesterday they were unchanged at 760p. The final dividend of 7.9p (6.55p) makes a total of 11.8p, a rise for the year of 20 per cent.

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(Incorporated in England and Wales under the Companies Act 1985 with registered no. 3723034)

and

GARTMORE HIGH INCOME SECURITIES PLC

(Incorporated in England and Wales under the Companies Act 1985 with registered no. 3723087)

Placing of

20 million Ordinary Income Shares of 10p each at 100p

and

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Sponsored by

Greig Middleton & Co. Limited

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Greig Middleton & Co. Limited
30 Lombard Street, London EC3V 9EN

and at the registered office of the Company in England:

Gartmore House, 16-18 Monmouth Street, London EC3R 8AJ

12 March 1999

Record-breaking run

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586	1585	1584	1583	1582	1581	1580	1579	1578	1577	1576	1575	1574	1573	1572	1571	1570	1569	1568	1567	1566	1565	1564	1563	1562	1561	1560	1559	1558	1557	1556	1555	1554	1553	1552	1551	1550	1549	1548	1547	1546	1545	1544	1543	1542	1541	1540	1539	1538	1537	1536	1535	1534	1533	1532	1531	1530	1529	1528	1527	1526	1525	1524	1523	1522	1521	1520	1519	1518	1517	1516	1515	1514	1513	1512	1511	1510	1509	1508	1507	1506	1505	1504	1503	1502	1501	1500	1499	1498	1497	1496	1495	1494	1493	1492	1491	1490	1489	1488	1487	1486	1485	1484	1483	1482	1481	1480	1479	1478	1477	1476	1475	1474	1473	1472	1471	1470	1469	1468	1467	1466	1465	1464	1463	1462	1461	1460	1459	1458	1457	1456	1455	1454	1453	1452	1451	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443	1442	1441	1440	1439	1438	1437	1436	1435	1434	1433	1432	1431	1430	1429	1428	1427	1426	1425	1424	1423	1422	1421	1420	1419	1418	1417	1416	1415	1414	1413	1412	1411	1410	1409	1408	1407	1406	1405	1404	1403	1402	1401	1400	1399	1398	1397	1396	1395	1394	1393	1392	1391	1390	1389	1388	1387	1386	1385	1384	1383	1382	1381	1380	1379	1378	1377	1376	1375	1374	1373	1372	1371	1370	1369	1368	1367	1366	1365	1364	1363	1362	1361	1360	1359	1358	1357	1356	1355	1354	1353	1352	1351	1350	1349	1348	1347	1346	1345	1344	1343	1342	1341	1340	1339	1338	1337	1336	1335	1334	1333	1332	1331	1330	1329	1328	1327	1326	1325	1324	1323	1322	1321	1320	1319	1318	1317	1316	1315	1314	1313	1312	1311	1310	1309	1308	1307	1306	1305	1304	1303	1302	1301	1300	1299	1298	1297	1296	1295	1294	1293	1292	1291	1290	1289	1288	1287	1286	1285	1284	1283	1282	1281	1280	1279	1278	1277	1276	1275	1274	1273	1272	1271	1270	1269	1268	1267	1266	1265	1264	1263	1262	1261	1260	1259	1258	1257	1256	1255	1254	1253	1252	1251	1250	1249	1248	1247	1246	1245	1244	1243	1242	1241	1240	1239	1238	1237	1236	1235	1234	1233	1232	1231	1230	1229	1228	1227	1226	1225	1224	1223	1222	1221	1220	1219	1218	1217	1216	1215	1214	1213	1212	1211	1210	1209	1208	1207	1206	1205	1204	1203	1202	1201	1200	1199	1198	1197	1196	1195	1194	1193	1192	1191	1190	1189	1188	1187	1186	1185	1184	1183	1182	1181	1180	1179	1178	1177	1176	1175	1174	1173	1172	1171	1170	1169	1168	1167	1166	1165	1164	1163	1162	1161	1160	1159	1158	1157	1156	1155	1154	1153	1152	1151	1150	1149	1148	1147	1146	1145	1144	1143	1142	1141	1140	1139	1138	1137	1136	1135	1134	1133	1132	1131	1130	1129	1128	1127	1126	1125	1124	1123	1122	1121	1120	1119	1118	1117	1116	1115	1114	1113	1112	1111	1110	1109	1108	1107	1106	1105	1104	1103	1102	1101	1100	1099	1098	1097	1096	1095	1094	1093	1092	1091	1090	1089	1088	1087	1086	1085	1084	1083	1082	1081	1080	1079	1078	1077	1076	1075	1074	1073	1072	1071	1070	1069	1068	1067	1066	1065	1064	1063	1062	1061	1060	1059	1058	1057	1056	1055	1054	1053	1052	1051	1050	1049	1048	1047	1046	1045	1044	1043	1042	1041	1040	1039	1038	1037	1036	1035	1034	1033	1032	1031	1030	1029	1028	1027	1026	1025	1024	1023	1022	1021	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1015	1014	1013	1012	1011	1010	1009	1008	1007	1006	1005	1004	1003	1002	1001	1000	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THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

[illegible]

Not often does this colossal venture to comprehend the sweaty ritual of sex or the arcane joys of high finance. But a saga like the Barle of Whaley Stadium is far too much for the left dangling between straps and bean-couriers. In its chief features will be largely recognised by arts page readers: monstrous waste of literary money, clash of giant egos, quagmire of stuffy by headless clockwork government complacency, managerial mishaps on a Titanic scale. In short, all the makings of a first-class national humiliation.

Besides which, it is an arts mess around with Wembley, St. Mess and Arena and you have strokes, jeopardised two of the few white men in London capable of housing the biggest pop and club events, from Madonna to Prince on ice and the Three Tenors.

London seems destined to be reluctant host to one public bawling fiasco every decade, down to the Seventies it was the British Centre in the Eighties the British Library. Both were apparently constructed in a surreal periphery universe where budgets and deadlines

Time tra

Sometimes it seems as though every public building in Dublin currently shelters some kind of tribunal aimed at righting the wrongs of the past, rooting out the wrongdoers and offering to the nation's rankles secrets healthy doses of what Jerry Springer might call "the antiseptic of sunlight".

national examination of conscience, Hugh Leonard's latest venture on to the Abbey stage uses the playwright's by-now familiar dramatic technique of overlapping the past and present to offer glimpses not of blue remembered hills, but of a century of infamy.

The audience is forced to sit the ground running as they are unceremoniously planted in a field in rural Limerick, where a portentous meeting of three women is taking place around an ancient stone.

Their meeting is extraordinary since one of the trio, Cae (Karen Ardifi), has been dead for many years but appears as a youth, while another, her daughter Triona (Catherine Walsh), is still living in 1960s Ireland, a time when "no child was too young to offend the mother of God".

The third woman, Celia 37-year-old grand-daughter Kate (Ingrid Craigie), a novelist who is careful always to include love in the title of her books, lives in the Ireland of the present day and therefore wins the dubious honour of filling everybody in on "the way things are".

Dark secrets that turn out to be neither as dark nor as secret as they seemed bubble to the surface as Leonard compares and contrasts Ireland

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Christopher Hampton's crisp, as translation seldom be to be Mrs Christie's reception of his wife as "wearily, in a state of distance, creates her in front of us before one of her tiresome gestures mockingly imitated.

The present cast is the tenth as play arrived in London two years

NOA



“UNITED FRUIT”

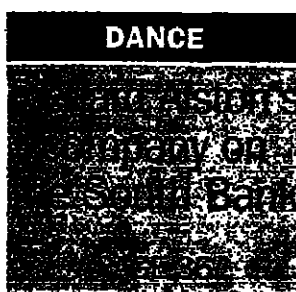
THE

EVERY MAN

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[illegible]

1001



DANCE

THE TIMES ARTS

POP
Master the Internet and rule the world
PAGE 37



Not often does this column venture to comprehend the sweaty ritual of sport or the arcane joys of high finance. But a saga like the Battle of Wembley Stadium is far too enthralling to be left dangling between jockstraps and bean-counters. Indeed, its chief features will be happily recognised by arts page readers — ie, monstrous waste of lottery money; clash of giant egos; quangoes apparently staffed by headless chickens; government complacency; and managerial mishaps on a Titanic scale. In short, all the makings of a first-class national humiliation.

Besides which, it is an arts story. Mess around with Wembley Stadium and Arena and you have, at a stroke, jeopardised two of the very best venues in London capable of housing the biggest pop and showbiz events, from Madonna to Disney on Ice and the Three Tenors.

London seems destined to play reluctant host to one public building fiasco every decade, doesn't it? In the Seventies it was the Barbican Centre; in the Eighties the British Library. Both were apparently constructed in a surreal parallel universe where budgets and dead-

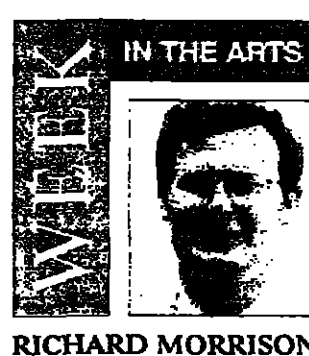
Sick as a parrot over ref's Wembley decision

lines passeth all understanding. Then, in the Nineties, the amazing parade of pratfalls (and indeed prats) accompanying the Royal Opera House redevelopment awoke memories of Norman Wisdom in older observers and the Teletubbies in younger ones. And now comes the Battle of Wembley Stadium, which seems certain to add greatly to the hilarity of nations in the first decade of the new century.

It all started when England decided that it wanted to stage the football World Cup in 2006. No, let me rephrase that. It started when the Government decided that it wanted England to stage the World Cup. Cynical friends offer the disgraceful hypothesis that this is part of a deep-laid plan to get Labour re-elected for the third time on a surge of feel-good patriotic fervour — but we know, of course, that such base calculations never enter the saintly realm of Tonyland. More pertinent, surely, is the Football Association's wacky belief

that, having ditched a New Age reincarnationist as national football coach, and replaced him with a man who says he will do the job on alternate Wednesday afternoons (weather permitting), England can actually win the damn trophy.

Anyway, in order to bring the competition to England, Wembley Stadium needs to be rebuilt. Nobody argues about that. Its amusingly medieval lavatories and corrugated-iron tea-bars may have been objects of wonder in 1923, but they hardly conform to present-day notions of comfort and joy. So a £120 million lottery grant, the biggest for any project except the dreaded Dome, will help to pay for the purchase and demolition of the stadium, and the erection of a new £200 million 80,000-seat venue in its place. How do you spend £200 million on building a new football ground, where the biggest features are fresh air and grass? The answer is that where lottery cash is involved, anything's possible!



RICHARD MORRISON

Then life's little complications started to kick in. The FA, which decided (along with the Sports Council) to purchase the stadium for £103 million and do the redevelopment itself, was rocked by a bizarre loans scandal and the Hoddle debacle. Then Brent council suddenly discovered a hitherto well-hidden preservationist zeal, and kicked up a stink when it learnt that Wem-

bley's "world-famous" twin towers would be demolished in the redevelopment. Naturally a gaggle of weedy heritage "guardians" jumped on the bandwagon to save the wretched concrete lumps.

Meanwhile the board of Wembley plc (which owns the stadium and its satellite arenas and exhibition halls) became bitterly divided. Three non-executive directors, led by a colourful 75-year-old boxing promoter, Jarvis Astaire, wanted to pull out of the FA deal altogether, arguing persuasively that Wembley is such a ghastly mess of inadequate car parks, dismal walkways and hopeless transport links that it needs redevelopment as a whole, not with the stadium removed and separately owned.

The rebel directors tried to stoke up shareholder discontent by encouraging rival bids for Wembley, first from a British company, Enr, then recently from the giant American promoters, SFX. The latter is a particularly intriguing outfit. With

a revenue of \$1.3 billion from 12,000 events last year, SFX could well afford to offer a good price for Wembley and turn it into Europe's foremost entertainment complex.

This boardroom conflict quickly developed into a thrilling slanging match between Astaire and the excitable Ken Bates, chairman of Chelsea Football Club, who is leading the FA's bid. Bates accuses Astaire of imperilling the whole World Cup 2006 dream. Astaire responds by calling the Chelsea gafer "Chairman Mao Tse-Bates". Now, now, girls: it's only a game.

But of course it isn't. It's big business. Yesterday the Wembley shareholders voted to press ahead with selling the stadium to the FA. That decision will be hailed as a triumph for the "patriots" after all, the way is now clear for England to bid for the World Cup. But patriotism in this case does seem to be the last refuge of the megalomaniac — and there

are a good many of them in the football world. The fact is that the Wembley complex hosts just a handful of football matches a year, whereas it stages dozens of big showbiz events every month. To redevelop the stadium, under the control of a football quango whose recent managerial record may charitably be called appalling, without reference to Wembley's showbiz programme and without solving the massive logistical problems of reaching this disastrously cramped corner of North London — that is a recipe for chaos.

What can be done? Well, when this Government created the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, it made much of how this grouping would allow many-sided challenges to be tackled "holistically". If Chris Smith is going to put that fine ideal into practice, the time is now and the place is Wembley. It's far more than a "field of dreams" for muddled oafs; it is a vital square mile in the nation's cultural life. Lavish £300 million on it by all means, but don't end up with a white elephant in a wasteland. London doesn't need another of those: one Dome is enough.

Time travellers

Sometimes it seems as though every public building in Dublin currently shelters some kind of tribunal aimed at righting the wrongs of the past, rooting out the wrongdoers and offering to the nation's ranklest secrets healthy doses of what Jerry Springer might call "the anti-septic of sunlight".

Not to be left behind by this national examination of conscience, Hugh Leonard's latest venture on to the Abbey stage uses the playwright's by-now familiar dramatic technique of overlapping the past and present to offer glimpses not of blue remembered hills, but of a century of infamy.

The audience is forced to hit the ground running as they are unceremoniously planted in a field in rural Limerick where a portentous meeting of three women is taking place around an ancient stone.

Their meeting is extraordinary since one of the trio, Cat (Karen Ardifi), has been dead for many years but appears as a youth, while another, her daughter Triona (Catherine Walsh), is still living in 1960s Ireland, a time when "no child was too young to offend the mother of God".

The third woman, Car's 37-year-old grand-daughter Kate (Ingrid Craigie), a novelist who is careful always to include love in the title of her books, lives in the Ireland of the present day and therefore wins the dubious honour of filling everybody in on "the way things are".

Dark secrets that turn out to be neither as dark nor as secret as they seemed bubble to the surface as Leonard compares and contrasts Ireland

past and present. But even before his heroines get around to quoting Larkin at each other, a familiar tone pervades the piece, a mixture of ridicule and jealousy provoked by the manners and freedoms of the modern world. Leonard can see, without much strain, that something has been gained over the old order in which single pregnant women were all but incarcerated, their children stolen from them. But he cannot bring himself to celebrate the new because there is simply too much around that merits his disdain.

Karen Ardifi pushes her weak role to its limits, giving through her boisterous physicality all the little substance the production has, while Catherine Walsh's good work never really escapes the flatness of her role. Kate, the character who ostensibly lives in the present day, seems as dated as any of her ancestors, full of Seventies zeal about her independence as she explains that "these days" someone you are in a relationship with is called your partner.

When Triona inquires in return if there is a business meeting going on, it gives only the meekest hint of the standard of the play's humour. Like too much of *Love in the Title*, Leonard's quips feel as though they were buried in a time capsule several years ago and only recently exhumed.

LUKE CLANCY



Femme fatale Amanda Harris as one of her four combustible women in *Take the Fire*

A paler shade of white this time

In another decade or two, when Matthew Warchus's production is on its fiftieth cast change, actors may look askance at colleagues who have not yet done time playing Marc Serge. Yvan or all three of the friends riven apart by Serge's purchase of an all-white painting for a price equivalent to what bumbling Yvan earns in a year. Yasmina Reza's play will have become the 21st century's *Mousetrap* — though only in terms of longevity.

Christopher Hampton's crisply literate translation takes wing and stings with a passion seldom to be found in Mrs Christie: a description of Marc's wife as "wearily malicious", for instance, creates her in front of us, even before one of her awesome gestures is mockingly imitated.

The present cast is the tenth since the play arrived in London two and a half

years ago, and though the play's shocks, set pieces and central argument still hold firm this is not one of the better combinations of actors. In different productions our sympathies switch between the actors at different points, but few people are likely to find themselves staying for long on the side of Danny Webb's Serge.

Of course he has every right to buy

anything he can afford, and plainly he loves his 20 square feet of white paint — though Reza, unwise-ly, never gives him the chance to reveal why this arouses such devotion. But when he first shows Marc his purchase his face wears a silently smug, thin smile of achievement that defines Serge's personality as fil-natured.

Until we learn from Marc that their

long friendship has been, from his point of view, that of mentor and pupil, the probability of these two ever having cared for each other seems minute. Tom Mannion's Marc clearly sees Serge's new love as treachery, but his attempts to be tolerant are convincing as well as comic, seething beneath the deadly calm.

Gary Olsen's Yvan earned a round of applause for the account of his ghastly wedding arrangements, but he should look to the clarity of his speaking here and in his collapse into sobs before his implacable ex-friends.

The silent olive-eating scene is as elegant and funny as ever but the matter of the play, not art but friendship, rests on frailer foundations this time round.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Fanning the French flames

Some pollster recently claimed that women average 10,000 words a day to men's 4,000. If Coteau's one-act *Bel Indifference* is to be believed, that is an insulting understatement. I did not count the words that poured from the protagonist, a nightclub performer based on Edith Piaf and played by Amanda Harris, but it was an unstoppable torrent of hurt rage. Since the man in the case remained silent throughout, the score over a full day would probably be 50,000 to nil.

Ravishing Indifference, as Helen Lea and Andrew Wale have translated the title, is the fourth and longest segment of the 75-minute evening called *Take the Fire*. And why that name? Because Coteau was once asked what he would take from his house if it were burning and replied that he'd take the fire. That is the sort of remark with which French intellectuals have always irritated plainer folk, but it serves to point out that the evening's content is not exactly ice-cold.

All four of the women played by Harris are pretty combustible, and all are living or reliving moments of maximum ignition. In the opening monologue, which involves a young criminal who has disguised himself as a woman to evade the *flics*, Harris commits murder with a gun. In the second, which is written in verse, she is a maid who kills her mistress with poison, and in the third she is a gambler who mainly damages herself. But though these pieces give Harris the chance to show us that she can smoulder and singe, they are pretty thin beside *Ravishing Indifference*.

True, this is hardly rich, complex stuff, but only radical feminists and newer-than-new men will deny that there is some truth in its simplicities. He is not home by 2am. She makes a furive, apologetic call to one of his friends, who fails to give him a proper alibi. Then in he walks, puts on a dressing-gown, reads *Le Figaro*, falls asleep, gets up, dresses and goes out again; and all without emitting half a conso-

nant. Meanwhile she delivers a monologue that moves from martyred reproach through insults and violent threats to protestations of love and humiliating apologies.

Coteau wrote this robust if predictable piece after Piaf told him of her troubles with

Paul Meurice, and Piaf proceeded herself to perform it in public. Did she, I wonder, justify Lea and Wale's title by making her audiences feel that coals of fire were pouring from her innards and being heaped on her lover's head? That is the challenge; and, good across though she is, Harris does not quite rise to it. She is pained and pleadingly middle-class, not tough and abjectly, defiantly ugly: an Amanda, not a Piaf.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

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OLD MIDDLEWESTERN SAYING

LISTINGS

Swingles at the Barbican

ARTS

MUSIC
Previn's birthday partyLloyd
says
his
prayers

RECOMMENDED TODAY

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Merril Hargle

LONDON

GROSS INDEMNITY: The Three Tittles of Oscar Wilde: Michael Pennington plays Wilde, with William Hoy and Celia Farrow as counsel for and against. In Wilson's play, Wilde is charged with the murder of a woman. (0171-494 5055). Previews from tonight, 7.45pm. Opens Mar 22. Tomorrow, 7.30pm. (S)

MAHLER AND VIENNA: The second leg of Christoph von Dohnanyi's series dedicated to the music of Gustav Mahler reaches its climax with a performance by the Philharmonie of the composer's epic Ninth Symphony. Dohnanyi conducts. Festival Hall (0171-600 4242). Tomorrow, 7.30pm. (S)

IN PERFECT HARMONY: An abundance of vocal harmonies can be enjoyed when the world-famous Swingle Singers are joined by members from the Barbican Chorus for an evening of glorious a cappella music. Barbican (0171-638 5851). Tomorrow, 7.30pm. (S)

ELSEWHERE

BIRMINGHAM: The Towards the Millennium festival continues its survey of the 1990s. Here the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Simon Rattle repeats last week's London concert of Liszt's Second and Third Symphonies followed by pieces by Takemitsu and Adams. Symphony Hall (021-222 3333). Tomorrow, 7pm. (S)

CAMBRIDGE: As a conclusion to the University Music Faculty's celebrations of Cambridge composers of the past 25 years, Stephen Cleobury conducts a performance of Alexander Goehr's mystical cantata, *The Death of Moses*. The evening also marks Goehr's departure as professor of music here. Royal Concert Hall (0141-287 5511). Tonight, 7.30pm. (S)

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London

■ House full, returns only ■ Some seats available ■ Seats at all prices

■ **SLAVA'S SHOWBOW:** The excellent Russian clown and mime artist Slava Polunin returns, with new material, now down to size as well as his unforgettable *Scat*. Piccadilly Theatre (0171-369 1734).

■ **MACBETH:** Rufus Sewall and Sally Dwyer play the supernatural theme and his music in John Crowley's production. Queens, W1 (0171-494 5041).

■ **GAMBLERS:** Tam Williams plays the seemingly invincible hero in Gogol's thrilling play, directed by Charlie Wood for a King's Head/Double Edge co-production. BAC (0171 223 2233). (S)

■ **HAMLET:** Rupert Whitman plays the hero in Christopher Goss's production, opening this rescheduled theatre. Greenwich (020 840 1111).

■ **TAKE THE FIVE:** Four monologues for women (gambler, maid, prostitute, dancer) by Jean Cocteau, performed by Amanda



Alexander Goehr is celebrated in Cambridge

As a dance-maker, Richard Alston thrives on music. It feeds his soul, and can help to set his choreography soaring. Alston's company sailed into London this week on three small but bumpy gusts of live music. The performances are part of a national tour that demonstrates why, after 30 years, Alston remains one of our top artistic resources.

In 1994's *Movements From Petrushka*, set to Stravinsky's pared-down piano version of his full orchestral score, the instrument is centre stage. So is

DANCE
Richard Alston
Queen Elizabeth Hall

the drama, conveyed entirely yet also abstractly through dance.

Alston's inspiration is both Fokine's 1911 ballet about a pitiable puppet-artist, and the equally tragic later life of Vaslav Nijinsky, originator of the ballet's title role. Christopher Tudor gave the central figure a troubled power. A string of fluid solo actions perfectly betray an outcast's anguish: a quick tumble, rolling shoulder and juddering head, a flicking of the arms, some elbow-clutching crouches. How ironic that all this neurotic physical behaviour should stem from such a strong, stable-looking specimen as Tudor.

His tortured isolation was underlined by the high-spirited partnerships of three couples. Here the weighted inflections of Russian folk dance are seen into Alston's familiar style, complete with signature windmill-armed leaps. The music capers on the edge of mania, and Alston rides it without becoming its slave.

In last year's *Waltzes in Disorder*, the cue came from Brahms's *Liedeslieder-Walzer* Op 52, for four singers and two pianists. The lush loops and laments of Alston's writing might initially justify those who accuse him of sexlessness. Then suddenly, with a clasp of a neck and a stroked cheek, the dance is doing more than

The bird-like Martin Lawrence takes flight in Richard Alston's *Waltzes in Disorder* from last year, danced to Brahms

skimming across a surface of whipped-cream Romanticism. Two men—Tudor and the delicate, bird-like Martin Lawrence—establish an intimate and enchanted bond that can't be shaken off.

The programme's newest

work exposes some of Alston's limitations. The impetus of *Slow Airs Almost All of Them* is Mozart's arrangements of several Bach fugues for string trio. It's hard not to regard the result as just another of Alston's attractive ensemble pieces

—all subdued, lyrical athleticism, a melding of mostly solos and duets so smooth, so lacking in traction that they roll on to, and slip out of, your consciousness as you watch.

Yet Alston's craft as an honest-to-goodness maker of steps

transcends mere noodling around. Although he rarely turns up the heat to full blast, the work communicates a passionate and mature intelligence about bodies in motion.

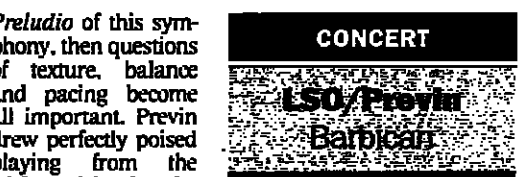
DONALD HUTERA

Subtly celebrating

I shouldn't quite say the party would have begun—the party-poppers were missing after Kiri Te Kanawa's cancellation at the weekend. But three days later André Previn's 70th birthday celebrations got underway in earnest at the Barbican.

Earnest was the word. For it was with the measured tread, retrospective cast of mind and visionary perspective of a fellow 70-year-old that Previn and the London Symphony Orchestra began the evening. Previn won national affection as early as the 1960s for his championship of English composers; and it was Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony, breathing the rarefied air of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, which Previn chose for the occasion.

This was a performance of subtle, quietly spoken authority. When the material is as insubstantial as the modally inflected melody which dominates the



LSO/Previn Barbican

ly English up and over into the wider European musical community for the first time.

Previn's performance with the LSO made us hear those pungent, exotic sonorities of the opening *Ave*. The "thousand-coloured light" of the spring sun, as evoked in an anonymous 16th-century poem, was refracted through the strong and variegated voices of the Lon-

don Symphony Chorus, whose admirable diction reanimated every poem that was theirs.

John Mark Ainsley was Spenser's heroic *Merry Cuckoo* and, later, created quite wonderfully the ecstatic vision within Henry Vaughan's *Waters Above*, its spiritual showers dancing in the bows of the violins.

The violas were equally sensitive partners to Robert Alexander in Herick's *Welcome Maids of Honour*, while Felicity Lott enjoyed robust repartee with the excellent Fitchley Children's Music Group in *The Driving Boy*.

A slightly stooping Previn seemed physically dwarfed by his tall colleagues as he took a final bow; but these self-effacing performances had undeniable and memorable stature.

HILARY FINCH

NEW JAZZ ALBUMS

with his familiar warbling, rapturously meditative sound, who sets the album's tone, whether he is reinterpreting old material—*Island Blues*, *Forest Flower*, exploring originals, or taking a fresh look at Billy Strayhorn's *A Flower is a Lovesome Thing*.

Consequently, a straightforward jazz trumpet of the sort Gunn provides for Wynton Marsalis's Lincoln Centre Jazz Orchestra jostles with the hip-hop and rolling funk he plays with Branford Marsalis's Buckshot LeFonque; a Woody Shaw composition is preceded by a brief scratching solo by DJ Apollo, and samples, of everything from Run-DMC to statements from Charles Mingus and Wynton himself, crop up throughout the album.

The result, courtesy of the skill and enthusiasm of the musicians Gunn has assembled (who include reedsman Gregory Tardy and trombonist Andre Heyward), not to mention his own brightly inventive trumpet and flugelhorn playing, is an intriguing—tour d'honneur of contemporary New York sounds.

CHRIS PARKER

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

PATCH ADAMS (12): Robin Williams puts the comic stitches in this absurd medical movie about a doctor who wants to cure the world with laughter. Director Tom Shadyac extracts an obscene amount of sentiment with as little as possible.

PLEASANTVILLE (12): Ingenious spoof of American family values. Two dysfunctional 1950s teenagers get sucked into a squeaky-clean 1950s TV show. Great performances from Tobey Maguire, Jeff Daniels and Reese Witherspoon.

CENTRAL STATION (15): Walker Sallier's Brazilian road movie creates fabulous chemistry between a young boy in search of his identity and a cynical ex-teacher in search of her soul. Fernando Montenegro and Vinícius de Oliveira are astonishing.

SCHIZOPHOLIA (15): Steven Soderbergh's experimental satire on corporate reality is utter gibberish, with camera angles and dialogue to match.

CURRENT

BELOVED (15): Oprah Winfrey is surprisingly powerful as a runaway slave haunted by phobias, lynch mobs, and a dead daughter. Jonathan

Demme's overlong film fails, however, to get inside the beating heart of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize winner. With Danny Glover, Thandie Newton, and Kimberly Elise.

THE 39 STEPS (15): Hitchcock's witty take on the classic of a ticking clock of a mad scientist's mad quest for a cure for a rare disease. A romance and good hand-cuffing rarely feel more than a frame away.

THE THIN RED LINE (15): A glowering cast of American soldiers lose their sanity in the South Pacific during the Second World War. Terrence Malick's artistic masterpiece stars Sean Penn, Jim Caviezel, Ben Chaplin, Nick Nolte.

YOU'VE GOT MAIL (PG): Bulek-proof romantic disaster with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan who fall in love on the Internet. Writer/director Nora Ephron.

TITANIC TOWN (15): Julie Walters scolds as a pugnacious Catholic housewife in this grim review of Northern Ireland's troubles circa 1972. Roger Michell directs.

APPLICATION (15): Paul Schrader's bizarre portrait of a mad scientist's small-town cop. Nick Nolte and James Coburn put in powerful performances as father and son caught in a cycle of mad violence.

CLASSICAL CONCERTS

■ **Berlin's Philharmonie:** Claudio Abbado leads the Berlin Philharmonie in a concert of Vaughan Williams's *Symphony No. 3* and *Symphony No. 4*. (0171 638 5851).

■ **Wigmore Hall:** The Wigmore Hall presents a concert of Vaughan Williams's *Symphony No. 3* and *Symphony No. 4*. (0171 638 5851).

OPERA & BALLET

■ **Coliseum:** The Coliseum presents a concert of Vaughan Williams's *Symphony No. 3* and *Symphony No. 4*. (0171 638 5851).

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■ **Adelphi:** Adelphi presents a concert of Vaughan Williams's *Symphony No. 3* and *Symphony No. 4*. (0171 638 5851).

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■ **Chicago:** Chicago presents a concert of Vaughan Williams's *Symphony No. 3* and *Symphony No. 4*. (0171 638 5851).

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■ **Antique & Art Fairs:** Antique & Art Fairs presents a concert of Vaughan Williams's *Symphony No. 3* and *Symphony No. 4*. (0171 638 5851).

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■ **The Chelsea Antiques Fair:** The Chelsea Antiques Fair presents a concert of Vaughan Williams's *Symphony No. 3* and *Symphony No. 4*. (0171 638 5851).

12-21 March

■ **12-21 March:** 12-21 March presents a concert of Vaughan Williams's *Symphony No. 3* and *Symphony No. 4*. (0171 638 5851).

43 Quality Stands

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mainly pre Victorian

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POP ALBUMS
13 cheers for Blur

ARTS

TOMORROW
Top gigs listed in Metro

Triskaidekaphilia rules, OK

NEW POP ALBUMS: Blur tempt fate and the fickle taste of the public on the experimental *13*, and emerge triumphant, says David Sinclair

BLUR

13 (Food CD 29 £14.99)

"WHO dares wins", a motto designed to inspire elite soldiers, could equally well have been coined to describe Blur's progress through the 1990s. Having made their mark as sad, strung-out indie-kids, they had the wit to embrace the brash, laddish certainties of Britpop, and then the nerve to administer a savage bite to the hand feeding them via 1997's *Blur*, a wilfully outré collection which confounded all expectations by becoming their bestselling album yet.

They have now thrown all remaining caution to the wind, cutting the ties with their long-standing producer Stephen Street, abandoning any lingering musical inhibitions and tempting fate with the very title of their sixth album, *13*. The results so far include a single (the pseudo-gospel singalong, *Tender*) that was even playlisted on Radio 2, a "Blur day" on Radio 1 and blanket approval in all quarters of the press. As far as having your cake and eating it goes, it doesn't get much chancier than this.

Produced by William Orbit (who co-produced Madonna's *Ray of Light*), the album is every bit as adventurous as *Blur* — and then some. The horribly distorted guitar sound on *Bugman*, the sonic hailstorm that gradually overhauls *1992*, the long, discordant climax of *Trimm Trabb* and the fragmented, falsetto vocals in *Battle* suggest a range of impeccable leftfield influences ranging from Iggy Pop and early Roxy Music to Tori Amos and the Cocteau Twins. The strange little codas, tacked on like musical appendices to numbers such as *BLUERE.M.I.*, *Coffee & TV* and *Caramel* contribute to a sense of mild disorientation, and if it weren't for the digital

display you would quickly lose track of which song is which.

Constantly surprising and extraordinarily inventive, this is an album that is initially easier to admire than to fall in love with, although the wonderfully loose, hip-hop groove and wonky guitar scrawl of *Trailerpark* provides an instant buzz, its mantra-like lyric "I lost my girl to the Rolling Stones" drawing attention to a problem which seems to be on the increase.

While Oasis have long been compared to the Beatles, it is Blur who have ended up emulating the Beatles' trick of capturing both the popular vote and the creative high ground, a feat which they continue to pull off with the impressive scope and sheer daring of *13*.

BETH ORTON

Central Reservation

(Heavenly HMVLP22 £12.99)

ALTHOUGH she has been a fellow traveller of dance artists such as William Orbit and the Chemical Brothers, Beth Orton reverts almost entirely to folk singer-songwriter mode for *Central Reservation*. With violins and cellos lending support to her acoustic guitar and austere vocal tone, numbers such as *Blood Red River* and *Devil's Song* have the chilly air of a chamber recital, while the more relaxed moods of *Sweetest Decline* (with Dr John on piano) and *Pass in Time* (featuring Terry Callier on harmony vocals) tend towards the soporific.

The best tracks are *Stolen Car*, with its revving slide guitar solo by Ben Harper, and the harder, hip-hop groove of *Stars All Seem to Weep*, but neither song is typical. "It's like catching snow on your tongue/Can't pin this butterfly down," she sings, and the charm of this album proves equally elusive.

WILCO

Summerteeth

(Reprise 9362-47282 +2 £13.99)

HAVING promised so much with their 1997 album, *Being There*, Wilco return with *Summerteeth*, a mildly disappointing follow-up which, although assembled with the same scrupulous attention to detail as *Being There*, lacks the stormy passion and casual swagger that made that album such compulsive listening.

Proudly flagging a range of 1960s influences — from the

Lennon-esque plod of *My Darling* to the Beach Boys-style harmonies of *Nothing'sgonnastandinnway* (Again) — Jeff Tweedy sings in a world-weary voice of sleepless nights, flawed relationships and the trials of growing old.

"I printed my name on the back of a leaf/And I watched it float away," he sings in *Via Chicago*, a song full of dark imagery and melancholy intent that disintegrates into a Neil Young-inspired guitar firestorm as, admittedly not

for the only time, a burst of the old magic returns.

JEFF BECK

Who Else?

(Epic 493041 £14.99)

STILL the most accomplished rock guitarist this country has ever produced, and still the

most indolent, Jeff Beck takes the latest step in a long but fitful career with *Who Else?* (apparently not a reference to Rory Bremner), his first album of new material since *Jeff Beck's Guitar Shop* in 1989.

While hardly a part of the contemporary scene, Beck is alert to recent developments, and makes a good fist of marrying his explosive playing style to the fast, Prodigy-inspired techno rhythm tracks of *What Mama Said* and *Psycho Sam*.



Magical mystery tourists: while Oasis have long been compared to the Beatles, it is Blur who have emulated the Beatles' trick of capturing both the popular vote and the creative high ground

TOP TEN ALBUMS

1	(4)	Performance and Cocktails	Stereophonics (V2)
2	(1)	Talk on Corners	Corrs (Atlantic)
3	(2)	The Misadventures of	Lauren Hill (Columbia)
4	(3)	I've Been Expecting You	Robbie Williams (Chrysalis)
5	(6)	This Is My Truth Tell Me Yours	Manic Street Preachers (Epic)
6	(5)	You've Come a Long Way, Baby	Fabrizio Fabbri (Atlantic)
7	(8)	Forgiveness, not Forgiveness	Corrs (Atlantic)
8	(10)	My Love Is Your Love	Whitney Houston (Arista)
9	(12)	Green Turf	Cardigans (Stockholm)
10	(7)	Step One	Steps (Epic)

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Figure in brackets indicates last week's position

● Caitlin Moran is unwell.

The cyberspace cowboys ride out

Downloading from the Internet will spell the end of music as we know it

It is nine o'clock on a Wednesday night. At a studio in London the electronics duo Coldcut are performing a session of music accompanied by visuals which goes out live on the Internet at www.pirateriv.net. At the same time, a man in Cornwall tunes into an American alternative rock radio station called 97X, which serves the Cincinnati area from an adjoining university town in Ohio. He does this by tapping www.woxy97x.com into his computer service provider.

Meanwhile, in a village in northern Sweden, 100 miles from the nearest record shop, a woman accesses Boxman (www.boxman.com), an Internet retailer that claims to have cornered a 10 per cent share of the Scandinavian market in just two years, and orders the new CD by American underground band Sleater-Kinney. It will arrive through her letterbox by the weekend.

At the University of Victoria in Canada, an engineering student in search of a track from an old Aerosmith album does not even have to wait that long. Using MP3 technology, he downloads the song from one of the many illegal "jukebox" web sites which offer a wide variety of music, free of charge, as a "public service" to Internet users.

You don't have to understand how all this is done to realise that monumental changes are afoot in the music industry.



"If all music is instantly pirated how are we going to stay in business?" says Matt Black

try. "People think it's years away," says marketing consultant Jon Webster. "It's not. It's happening right now."

Consumers, it seems, cannot lose. Once the new technology has been invested in and mastered, a whole world of music is placed at their fingertips. No more trudging to the local record shop or wandering round the megastore in search of an album that may be out of stock or even deleted. And, once you know where to look in cyberspace, a lot of music can be acquired for the cost of a phone call.

But the benefits of these extraordinary developments may be less obvious to the copyright owners of the songs themselves. "It is a threat," Webster says. "People are downloading illegal digital

copies of albums that have been posted on the Internet. That's theft. And in many cases it is the artists who are losing out even more than the record companies."

"All the major record companies see the Internet as a threat," says Andy Saunders, head of communications of the independent label Creation, whose boss Alan McGee was one of the first to predict that computer technology would radically alter the structure of the music business. "We wanted to put our own stuff on an MP3 site," Saunders says. "But Sony [which has a 49 per cent stake in Creation] asked us not to. Our attitude is that it's the Wild West out there, and we want to keep an open mind about it."

Even Matt Black of Coldcut,

who has been "something of an evangelist for DIY digital culture", has misgivings about the spread of MP3 technology. "I'm in an ambivalent situation," he says. "I'm pleased that more people are making their own music and that there are alternative forms of distribution, but as an artist and owner of my own record label [Ninja Tune] I make a living out of selling music. If all music can become instantly pirated and that becomes acceptable, how are we going to stay in business?"

But if the artists and record companies are feeling vulnerable, then what of the high street retailers? There will always be artists making the music and record companies which will devise a way of marketing it for a profit. But if

everyone were to buy music direct from the source, so to speak, presumably it would be the end of record shops as we know them.

Jonathan Rees, the chart, rock & pop manager of HMV UK, speaks for many when he says he believes the likelihood of such a radical development is remote. "I don't think downloading and Internet retailing will ever take off to that degree," Rees says. "People will always enjoy the process of buying music from a record store."

"It's only a threat if you don't embrace it," says Elspeth Thomson, marketing director of Tower Records, which is preparing to open a string of "express" stores in which customers will be able to choose and order the music they want to buy from an online music database. The system will also include a feature called Tower Unflogged, which will give unsigned bands the chance to post samples of their music on the website and thereby gain exposure and feedback.

Perhaps this is the future, a system whereby retailers, artists and record companies work together to make the most of the expanded opportunities which the Internet has to offer. Jimmy Devlin, MD of Globalfulfillment.com, a rapidly growing Internet retail facilitator, believes so.

"New technology is always greeted with suspicion by the record industry," he says. "Home taping didn't kill music, and video didn't kill the movies. They tapped into a new market. It's the same with the Internet and online retailing. It's a value-add situation."

DAVID SINCLAIR

● Coldcut play the Forum, London NW5 (0171-284 2300) next Friday. The show can be viewed live on www.pirateriv.net.

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Everyday voices of Ulster

A unique radio series is revealing a legacy of pain, says its producer
John O'Neill

Hundreds of people affected by the Troubles in Northern Ireland, whose tales have never previously been told, are describing their experiences in an ambitious series of interviews for Radio Ulster.

Late last year, as plans for the series fell into shape, Anna Carragher, head of broadcast at BBC Northern Ireland, rightly described the *Legacy* project as "a voice for the voiceless".

For producers, the early discussions on any broadcast can be daunting. The *Legacy* project was more intimidating than most. As co-producers, Elizabeth Kelly and I faced the task of putting together 365 interviews, each edited down to two minutes, for broadcast daily throughout 1999 in a prime-time slot on Radio Ulster.

It was clear from the start that we had to be open-minded and allow each speaker to put forward their thoughts on the events. This required sensitivity — there was no doubt that some of the material would upset sections of our audience: in Northern Ireland what is a victim to one group is often seen as a legitimate target by the other. It became obvious that our impartiality would be severely tested.

Last autumn Elizabeth and I, along with line manager Kieran Hegarty, set about working out how to present such stories. We needed to reflect all shades of opinion, and experiences. In Northern Ireland there is hardly a person who has not been affected by the Troubles, so we began with the people we knew, explored contacts and talked to community and victim support groups. We set up a contact line and encouraged people to come forward with stories. We made it



Every day this year John O'Neill and his Radio Ulster team are broadcasting the tales of people affected by the Troubles.

clear that we were not seeking politicians, campaigners or anyone who could be thought of as having a "public profile". In the early days I spoke to several callers who had suffered but had made contributions to the media. I explained to one woman that her

appearances in the media had given her a profile and that while I in no way wished to demean the deaths in her family, I would not be recording her. "I understand," she replied. "You want to talk to

people who haven't had a chance to speak. That's OK."

January 1 loomed large on the calendar and we had set ourselves a target of five interviews to be recorded and edited each week. It was hard to make the tar-

get as the public had no concept of how it worked. I flew to England to record soldiers who had served here; Elizabeth talked to victims' groups. We travelled hundreds of miles each week. The material shocked both of us.

Some people had never spoken so frankly to a stranger, for others it was the first time that they had got to grips with the enormity of what had happened to them. We found ourselves in an unusual role as we talked to people who wanted someone to explain why it had all happened. I now carry the telephone numbers of bereavement counsellors.

We went on air and waited for the reaction — it didn't take long. The first call complained of bias towards the security forces. I explained that the caller might wait a few months and then reflect on our coverage. We now get a steady positive feedback. The latest was a call from the man who co-ordinated the Omagh trauma team. He felt that *Legacy* was a positive contribution.

The most recent member of our team, Aislinn Duffield, described to me her shock at some of the details given to her. I identified with her feelings. I spent ten years doing social work with young people who had problems relating to authority, and who were often easy targets for recruitment by paramilitary groups. I had assumed that I had a detailed knowledge of Northern Ireland, its people and their problems. I was wrong.

I am stunned by the detail of what has happened to some people I interviewed: the savagery that has been inflicted on them; the farmer who reluctantly left the land after two gun attacks; the grief of a woman whose mother 25 years ago left to go shopping and died in a bomb blast; the family who want to know why their son could not have been arrested instead of being shot.

I was taught to maintain a "professional detachment" from the detail of my work. But it's difficult as the enormity of the wrongdoing pours out. But what astounds me most is the forgiveness and the willingness to understand and move on. *Legacy* has become a small part of that process.

● *Legacy* is broadcast daily at 8.58am on Radio Ulster.

Live and let die?

TWO journals cast doubt on the future of Live TV, Mirror group's cable channel. Marketing reports that Live's losses are running at £9 million "and with predators circling, it seems only a matter of time before Mirror Group pulls the plug... Signs are that it won't be around to broadcast New Millennium Topless Darts." In Broadcast the headline is "End of the Line for Live?", but the magazine weighs in with good news for the beleaguered channel: the first sale of one of its programmes, *Lie Detector*, to ITV.

■ **TONY SCOLLER**, the marketing director of the drinks firm UDV, sparked a lively debate in a speech doubling the value of advertising spirits on TV. *Marketing Week* reports that, since the voluntary ban on spirits advertising was lifted five years ago, the hard stuff has commanded a dwindling share of the drinks market. Last year £42 million was spent by liquor firms on TV ads, but sales still fell. The magazine



says that Scoller "may have dealt the glamorous world of TV advertising a blow from which it will be hard to recover".

■ **CHANGING FACES**: Chris Mann, sacked as editor of News Direct 97.3FM, to sue London News Radio, alleging unfair dismissal; Joe Murphy from *The Mail on Sunday* to be political editor of *The Sunday Telegraph* (Press Gazette); John Coyle splits from old PR partner Brian Basham to found Clerkenwell Communications with Emma Kane (PR Week); Tony Cox quits as creative director of BMP DDB to take senior role in creative department at Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO (Campaign).

■ **GETTING THE BUSINESS**: Shell launches £20 million campaign using J Walter Thompson and the PR firm Fishburn Hedges (Marketing); Acacia Expeditions engages the Travel PR Company to handle media relations after six of its clients were killed in Uganda (PR Week).

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Bronner Slosberg Humphrey

'Shows for the family are hard to find'

Claudia Rosencrantz brought us 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?' What else is up her sleeve, asks Carol Midgley

This should have been a week of unqualified triumph for Claudia Rosencrantz, ITV's controller of entertainment. *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, the addictive TV game show has just started its third series and achieved record audiences of nearly 19 million.

But rather than basking in glory, ITV's press office was coping with the embarrassing revelation that a contestant who won £125,000 had actually answered one of his questions incorrectly. The show's producers failed to notice but hundreds of viewers telephoned ITV and national newspapers to register the blunder.

While it may have slightly dulled the shine of the show's success, the incident is unlikely to wipe the smiles off the faces of ITV executives. The programme, initially denounced as immoral for offering £1 million as a quiz prize, is proving to be ITV's golden goose. A recent show pulled in 18.8 million "live" viewers, a figure expected to rise to 19.3 million when video recordings are taken into account. If so, it will break the record held by a 1977 edition of *Mastermind*, seen by 19.1 million.

It seems all the more remarkable then that the programme idea sat on Rosencrantz's desk for two years before it was put into production. When she first proposed it in 1996, ITV management felt that there were too many game shows. ITV was enjoying success with family shows such as *Wheel of Fortune* and *Play Your Cards Right*.

But Rosencrantz, convinced that the show would be a hit, persuaded its production company, Oslador, to be patient. When

David Liddiment took over as the director of programmes in late 1997 she pitched the idea again. Liddiment commissioned it immediately. The show, in which contestants answer 15 general knowledge questions to accumulate £1 million, was originally titled *Cash Mountain*. Rosencrantz disliked this name and it became *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, partly because she likes the song of the same name. "I knew instinctively it would work and David has given us a brief to go with what we believe in," she says.

Rosencrantz began her career at *The Sunday Telegraph* magazine and *Elle*, and later met David Montgomery, then Editor of *News of the World*, at a party. They were the only sober people there, and Montgomery offered her a job on his paper's magazine. In 1986 she joined LWT as a researcher in the

entertainment department. This spawned an eight-year working relationship with Barry Humphries, alias Dame Edna Everage. She went on to work with Chris Evans on *Don't Forget Your Toothbrush* and did an 18-month stint in the BBC factual department before returning to ITV in late 1995.

After three years in the job, Rosencrantz, 39, who commissioned such shows as *The Shane Ritchie Experience* and *Moment of Truth* (dubbed sadistic because it parades prizes in front of children, then snatches them away if their families fail to meet the challenge) is accustomed to hearing herself labelled the queen of the "tacky" Saturday night game show. But she says tacky is not necessarily a dirty word and that those who curl their lips at "un-



Winning formula: "I knew instinctively that *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* would work," says Claudia Rosencrantz

cynical" shows that appeal to a mass audience are elitist.

"The hardest thing is finding programmes that the entire family can watch together," she says. "*Millionaire* is a straightforward, uncynical show — look how the audience has reacted. People say *Moment of Truth* is cruel to the children who appear but if you talk to the kids, they are not really upset. We have already commissioned another series."

Now that ITV has promised advertisers that it is going upmarket and will draw in a wider and younger audience, her challenge

will be to find shows that fit that profile but remain the traditional Saturday evening TV "event".

Rosencrantz, who has a nine-month-old daughter, Lola, with her husband, the actor and writer Daniel Abner, also has a knack for knowing when shows are on their last legs. It was her decision to axe *Beadle's About*, the much vilified hoax show, and she recently announced the end of *Gladia-*tors, one of the big success stories of the Nineties. Meanwhile, the BBC is dispensing with *Noel's House Party*, another veteran of the Saturday evening schedule.

"Programmes have a natural lifespan, you must know when to call it a day," she says. "*Gladia-*tors has been brilliant, as has *House Party*, but people tire of things. Audiences are very television-literate these days; you can't underestimate that."

This raises the question of whether the audience will stick with *Millionaire* if nobody scoops the £1 million jackpot. So far the most won is £125,000. But public confidence in the show seems not to have been dented by this week's glitch (contestant Tony Kennedy gave 24 as the min-

imum number of strokes with which a tennis player can win a set. He was told he was right, although the correct answer is 12).

"It was a genuine mistake and we apologised for it," Rosencrantz says. "There was no soul-searching on our part over whether the contestant should keep the money — it was our mistake. But the checking procedures have been reinforced as a result."

Whether its success continues remains to be seen. "I think it has a way to go yet. The public certainly isn't bored by it. Even I can't stand to miss a show."

The bucks stop here

Hollywood studios want cheaper stars, says Boyd Farrow

The average cost of making and marketing a Hollywood movie is now a staggering \$78 million (about £52 million), according to the Motion Picture Association of America. While the bill for producing a typical Hollywood film fell by 1.4 per cent to \$52.7 million in 1998, the cost of marketing and distributing it soared, leaping by 13 per cent to \$25.3 million.

The slight dip in production costs is attributed to the studios being in "one of their periodic fits of cost control". Another reason is that major stars and directors are agreeing to forgo their initial fees in return for a slice of the box-office spoils. Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg, for example, may earn \$80 million between them from their cut of *Saving Private Ryan* ticket sales, eating into the studio's profits.

But Hollywood's belt-tightening clearly has not extended to movie marketing, the cost of which has escalated by 44 per cent over the past five years. Such expenditure on hype reflects the fact that many of the 250 or so studio films released each year earn 40 per cent of their American revenue during their first weekend. If they fail to ignite, they are removed swiftly to make way for other films. During the past few years, the studios have relied on a handful of big stars to "open" a picture — and big-star salaries have rocketed.

In 1994, two days before *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* opened, Time Warner-owned New Line Cinema refused to pay the film's unknown lead, Jim Carrey, \$1 million to star in another project, *Dumb & Dumber*. Two weeks later, when *Ace Ventura* proved a hit, New Line was forced to shell out \$7 million for Carrey to star in the same movie. His fee for *Ace Ventura* was \$300,000. In the next 12 months, price competition for top names went berserk.

On Monday, Bill Mechanic, the chairman of Fox Entertainment, told film convention delegates that the stars who now command \$20 million fees or 20 per cent of the box-office gross are pricing themselves out of the market. He said that all studios were slashing movie budgets and salaries, pointing to 20th Century Fox's use of such unknowns (at the time) as Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet for *Titanic*.

Mechanic's observations are borne out by the poor performance of big-star, big-budget titles such as *Lethal Weapon 4* and *The Avengers* in 1998. Disney's most profitable film last year was the \$19 million comedy *The Waterboy*, starring the unknown Adam Sandler, which grossed almost \$100 million. At the same time a spate of cheap and cheerful horror films, cast with teen TV idols, were among the most profitable films for years. Not surprisingly, Hollywood is now falling over itself to produce low-budget, youth-oriented films.

But, of course, today's youth heroes will be tomorrow's mega-stars: Leonardo DiCaprio is pocketing \$20 million to star in *The Beach* for Mechanic's studio.

The Net: so much, so fast — so what?

Once you're hooked on the Internet, surfing can become a compulsion — and if you're a journalist, you can't stop brooding on its implications for newspapers.

Are there profound lessons we ought to be learning? So I offer no apology for returning to subject of the Net, especially in the week of the Budget, which I tried to follow from the online editions of Britain's national newspapers. Could I get an Evening Mail signed on to the Press Association, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Electronic Telegraph*, *The Financial Times*, *The Independent*, *The Express*, *The Mirror* and *This Is Money*, the *Daily Mail* and *The Mail on Sunday* sites. So far as I could detect, *The Express*, *The Mirror* and *The Independent* had not attempted to run live reports but the rest competed to tell the story as it happened, offering regular news bites as Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, was speaking, except that

The Electronic Telegraph waited until the Budget was over. Some of the papers were less than helpful in signalling to a novice where to find the Budget report. *The Times* had two Budget links, including one that linked to the Inland Revenue, Treasury and Customs and Excise sites, but I got to just one, and then only because its editor had told me where to look.

I could not get any news from *This Is Money* until 6pm, even though it was running news flashes from 4pm. And I never cracked the FT site — almost certainly because it was in heavy demand. I have, however, been getting its budget e-mails for the past two days. So the easiest to find and use as an online evening newspaper for this novice were the PA

and *Guardian* sites. Both were running news flashes from the moment the Chancellor started speaking, with PA also offering a live video link. By 6pm *The Guardian* had also published a commentary on the Budget by Anthony Browne. *The Observer's* economics correspondent, *The Times* was updating until 2am and *The Mail on Sunday* was running tax tables from Price Waterhouse by 7pm. Yet the find of the day was the outstanding BBC website, which beat them all — hardly surprising, given that it has 100 staff agencies four for PA and *The Guardian*.

Yet even by fumbling round



the Net, I had assembled an *Evening Me* by 6pm and well before *The Nine O'Clock News* I had an A4 Net "newspaper" with as much information as the next morning's papers, including the full text of Brown's speech.

To all of which, one of my responses is: so what? For nothing in my *Evening Me* could match the sheer joy of spreading out the newspapers next morning — so much easier than searching through them all on the Net — and seeing on

display all the different voices of the British press. *The Sun*, with its front page announcing "Every A Winner — Guaranteed Prize for Every Reader" or *The Mirror*, with "Flash Gordon — He's helped every woman, every man, every child, every one of us". The *Daily Mail* accused Brown of a "tragic misjudgement" by new Labour on marriage and the family; in *The Guardian* Polly Toynbee described him as the "children's Chancellor".

Without endlessly clicking a mouse, I could revel in the commentaries — Anatole Kaletsky and Simon Jenkins in *The Times*, Hugo Young in *The Guardian*, Andrew Marr

and Charles Whelan in *The Express*, or Paul Routledge in *The Mirror* and obtain a quick sense of Brown's obvious political triumph.

With every new technological development, journalists seek some profound or threatening effect on newspapers. I am not sure there are any. Yet newspapers obviously can't rival the Internet for speed, and the Net appeals to a young constituency who aren't natural newspaper readers and whom editors are desperately trying to reach. So they are going to have to improve and speed up their act and think more imaginatively if they want to compete online with such news organisations as the BBC. That also means selling star columnists on the Net and linking online newspapers direct

to newspaper newsrooms. Net readers, as Simon Waldman of *The Guardian* says, are promiscuous and return only to sites that deliver.

Newspapers obviously cannot compete with the sheer volume of information on the Net — but they can, as *The Times* now does, publish links to the Web from news and features. So one major role for

the newspaper, as access to the Net becomes universal, will be to help readers to navigate the Net's avalanche of information.

I want to be complacent about the Net but I can't. On Tuesday, the FT had a record number of new registrations and its site and *The Guardian's* were visited by more than 50,000 readers, while PA recorded a 100 per cent increase in page impressions. Something significant is going on out there in cyberspace but nobody yet knows what to do about it.

From Goldeneye to golden Eyre

IF YOU tuned into *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, *A Touch of Frost* or *Goldeneye* this week, you are doing your bit to aid ITV's ruthless drive to reverse its fortunes, causing painful gasps among competitors.

When Richard Eyre, chief executive of the ITV network, set a target of 39 per cent of peak evening viewing 12 months ago for 1999 he was called brave to his face, mad behind his back. Now, he tells me, the running total so far this year is a 40.4 per cent share with a majority of new series in the top ten. And that is before the impact of shifting *News at Ten*. Adverts for the next Director-General of the BBC go out this week-end. Eyre is near the top of the list.

"It's like Bank Holiday every night," lamented a senior BBC executive as he watched the channel's share collapse nightly. The ending of *News at Ten*, clearing four hours for prime-time entertainment, represents a major shift in the ground

rules of British TV. But it is not all down to banishing news. BBC's performance last Sunday, a shattering reduction in share to 21 per cent, has led to heart-searching over whether Peter Salmon, controller of BBC1, should have insisted that *The Lakes* run on Sundays. Lots of swear words had to be cut to make it suitable for a Sabbath, which explains some strange "out of lip sync" sequences. It wasn't just bad dubbing.

I WATCHED the launch of the new *ITV Evening News* at 6.30pm with Baroness Thatcher on one side, and Sir Denis on the other, at a lavish party thrown by ITN. They were unimpressed with the opening ten-minute photo opportunity given to Gordon Brown and wandered off with Michael Forlito. It struck me that Labour grandees were in short supply. The explana-

tion? The Government remains riddled by the Independent Television Commission's (ITC) decision to allow *News at Ten* to go. The ITC's standing as regulator of all UK commercial television is not high either.



I am told that that is why Lord Holme of Cheltenham, the former Lib-Dem Northern Ireland spokesman, and trusted Blairite "gofer", has become deputy chairman of the ITC. Government Ministers are also raising eyebrows over the ITC's current consultation to see whether Internet content can be regulated. It is seen as pointless.

AMID all the publicity given to Carlton's purchase of Planet 24 from Sir Bob Geldof and Lord All, note that it is the first and certainly not the last deal by Steven Cain, Carlton Communications' new chief executive.

He joined arch-Tory Michael Green's TV company in January, after serving as marketing director for Asda. Green has a reputation to live down — as being hard to work for. Insiders gasp that they have seen him defer to Cain during meetings. Will this partnership flourish or founder?

WHAT is the mystery that accompanies any *Big Night Night* on Sky? Why, the time of the event Adverts for this weekend's Holyfield/Lewis encounter abound, but don't say when the main action from Madison Square Garden is likely to be. Sky is always curiously coy on this

point. The reason, of course, is that it thinks it will put off viewers if it says fans will have to stay up until 3am, for example. But this is downright inconvenient when accurate information would allow fans to choose between going bed and getting up early or staying up. I declare an interest. My husband buys all Sky's pay-per-view boxing events. I'm fed up with the way it runs Sunday. The rules of PPV television differ from free TV. More information please — boxing fans are highly motivated.

TREVOR McDONALD assures me that ITV's new current affairs show, *Tonight*, will now start on April 9 — and he's fronting it. But there is tension between ITN and Granada, which insists that the show belongs to the Manchester-based company. It wants to launch with some big exclusive stories in the can.

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THE TIMES & DILLONS FORUM in association with The Word

Times readers are invited to a rare evening with John le Carré, one of Britain's best-selling novelists, on Sunday, March 28, at 7pm.

Introduced by the Editor of The Times, Peter Stothard, the internationally acclaimed author will talk about his life and work, and read from his latest novel *Single & Single*. If you would like to ask John le Carré a question, please e-mail johnlecarre@the-times.co.uk. For more details visit The Times/le carré website at www.the-times.co.uk/lecarre.html.

The event, which forms part of The Word literary festival, will be held at the LSE Peacock theatre, Portugal Street, off Kingsway, London WC1. Tickets cost £9 and can be booked on 0171-863 8222

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media times

And now . . . the ex-girlfriend of the boyfriend of the wife of the boyfriend of Anthea



The chain of lovers that the tabloids find irresistible: clockwise from left, Carissa Mitchell, Anthony Constanduros, Della Bovey, Anthea Turner and Grant Bovey

Martyrdom," wrote George Bernard Shaw in *The Devil's Disciple*. "is the only way in which a man can become famous without ability."

This week, however, *The Mirror* has shown us that, in the modern age, there is another, far simpler method. On Tuesday it devoted the whole of page three to a story about Carissa Mitchell, a former girlfriend of Della Bovey's new boyfriend.

Della Bovey, you will remember, is the estranged wife

The enduring obsession with the love lives of Anthea Turner and Grant Bovey is becoming absurd, says Carol Midgley

of Grant Bovey, the new boyfriend of the television presenter Anthea Turner.

Just to recap, then, that's a whole page of a national daily newspaper taken up by the former girlfriend of the new boyfriend of the estranged wife of the new boyfriend of the current presenter of the *Wish You Were Here* holiday programme. Confused? Well, who wouldn't be?

The tenacity of newspapers in wringing the very last drops from a juicy story is legendary. But Fleet Street's current obsession with the Turner/Bovey story has shown to what absurd lengths the pursuit of the modern celebrity can go.

When Turner first announced that she and Bovey, a father of three, were leaving their spouses to set up home to-

gether, there were those who questioned whether this was really a story worthy of front-page splash news. Whether one agrees or not, how relevant can it be now 15 months down the line and four stages removed from the celebrity herself?

The Mirror was far from being the only newspaper which was prepared to invest time and money on seeking out An-

thony Constanduros, the new "toyboy lover" of Mrs Bovey. Last week a pack of journalists descended on Constanduros's home in West Sussex, some of whom admitted to being privately bemused at the ferocity with which the newswriters were chasing the story.

Constanduros was so taken aback that he asked family friend Harry Conroy, a media adviser and former leader of the National Union of Journalists, to manage the situation.

Conroy, who did not ask for a fee, used the Press Association to put out a photograph of Constanduros to stop the media chase. It was accompanied by a statement pleading for privacy as well as a reminder of the privacy clause in the

Press Complaints Commission Code.

"The situation was ridiculous," says Conroy. "I'm a journalist but I just couldn't see the story. Anthony is an ordinary guy but they were offering members of his family — even his grandmother — sums of £20,000 to talk about him. It went on for days. He was shocked. He could not believe how much interest there was in him, never mind his former girlfriend."

For now, the story has died down, and Carissa Mitchell, who was able to tell us riveting details like she and Constanduros used to "go to local pubs or stay in and cook", has had her 15 minutes of fame.

But at least she cannot be accused of doing a kiss-and-sell. As is expected of celebrities these days, Mitchell asked instead that a donation be made to Comic Relief.

Little voice making big waves

It is not often that the little man chasing an impossible dream succeeds. But Noah Samara, an Ethiopian-American, is getting close. It was surely wildly implausible for a private citizen to suggest that you could revolutionise communications and entertainment in the Third World by sending up three private-sector satellites — one each for Africa and the Middle East, Latin America and Asia — devoted to radio.

It has taken him nearly ten years but, last Friday, anyone jogging through St James's Park in Central London could have seen a small, excited group of people pointing an unusual-looking radio towards the sky. Coming in loud and clear from the first World-Space satellite, launched in November, was digital radio direct from Johannesburg.

The satellite is aimed at the African continent but is performing so well that the signal can be picked up in Europe as well. Two more satellites will be launched later this year as part of a project worth more than \$1 billion.

Samara will struggle in his drive to turn World-Space into a serious business but the consequences, should he succeed, could be profound. The receivers will soon be able to receive vast amounts of digital data, including the text of newspapers, which can be downloaded in seconds.

First indications, apart from the obviously untypical Budget Day, is that viewers will get considerable choice at 6pm and 6.30pm in the news agenda on offer from the BBC and ITV. On Monday, the first day of the new regime, the BBC offered stories such as the right to roam in the countryside, the problems with breast implants and the Northern Ireland deadline extended.

ITV carried stories such as a less-than-totally revealing interview with the Chancellor, Sir Bernard Ingham's contretemps with his neighbour, and a special on teenage female smokers.

A clue to what was going on came from Stewart Purvis, the chief executive of Independent Television News, interviewed for Channel 4's *And Finally* programme: "The dynamic is really news attracting the kind of audiences that advertisers want to buy, and the channel controllers sitting there saying 'I want those kind of advertisers. I need this kind of content. I need the news to deliver this kind of audience.'"

"This is complete heresy, of course, to the founding fathers of television news who believed that you had a public service."

Indeed it is.



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AIR FRANCE



CHANGING TIMES

Give News 24 a chance

Gerald Kaufman, whose book *My Life In The Silver Screen* accountably missed the best-sellers list, tells us that News 24 has "hardly any" viewers. Sir Paul Fox, the former Managing Director of BBC Television, writes in *The Daily Telegraph* (circulation just over a million) that BBC News 24 (watched by more than five million) is "unseen". And Sir Marmaduke Hussey, who takes some of the credit for launching Radio 5 Live as a round-the-clock channel for news and sport, thinks that what is right for radio is a step too far for television.

The sins attributed to News 24 by its critics are legion. The birth of the channel is claimed to be responsible for everything from budget cuts on *The World Tonight* to the loss of test cricket.

In fact, the most potent charge against the BBC is not that it launched News 24 but that it was late into a market which is vital for its future. The argument is simple. In homes with just the terrestrial channels, BBC News is watched for 1.49 hours per person per week but in households with cable and satellite that figure falls to 0.76 hours.

There is also a qualitative perception: multi-channel viewers are far less likely to think of the BBC as the first place they would turn to for fast, authoritative, breaking news. In those circumstances, the BBC had a clear choice. Either it could engage with the fact that audiences want news in a form and at a time convenient to them — or it could cling to the line that 1pm, 6pm and 9pm are the only times for the national news experience. It would, I believe, have been the greater arrogance if the BBC had stuck to a *table d'hôte* menu in an age of choice.

There is an argument that Sky News was there already, so there was no need for the BBC to wake in. I like Sky but I don't like the idea that it

Critics of the 'unseen' channel say it is bleeding the BBC dry. But Roger Mosey argues that they are misinformed



Gavin Esler, BBC News 24's evening anchorman

should be the only provider of 24-hour television news. I am equally opposed to the cable operators, mine included, who are dropping Sky News in favour of News 24. Choice should mean exactly that, and we want News 24 to win on its own merits and not because it is the only show in town.

So is it the editorial failings of News 24 that provoke the criticism? It is true there were rough edges early on, and we paid a price for being too ambitious with technology. We had a choice, though. The BBC of the past would have steamed ahead with old working practices at a higher cost but News 24 embraces the digital era and is willing to push the boundaries of broadcasting.

That is not, however, at the expense of quality. I defy anyone who saw the joint News 24

day. It is true of the American market as well as the UK. The power is with the consumer, and they may choose to watch at 9am or at 11.30pm. The aim is not to win millions of viewers at one time but to encourage people to use the channel over a period.

It is time to end the muddled thinking and misinformation about the channel. The creativity of the new generation seems to me infinitely preferable to the old British disease of carping from the sidelines.

● Roger Mosey is Acting Director, Continuous News BBC

Little voice making big waves

Get me a Yemeni chief on the phone

Chat show researchers have a hard time, but so do those on Toay, says Henry Bonsu

Last week the BBC issued P45s to three members of staff and a freelancer from *The Vaneza Show* for using bogus guestnames including fake leading singer and fraudulent far-fetched. The sacking, after a BBC investigation, will heighten a fear and loathing among researchers working on sat programmes.

On a val show has seen her workday rocket and morale plummet since her bosses insisted on new safeguards against hoaxes. The pressure to stopfakes slipping through is now so great that she hardly eats sleeps.

Likewise others, I imagine, who work on programmes such as *Kilroy* (BBC and Trisha (TV), she is seriously considering her future. Roger Bolton, the presenter of Channel 4's *Right to Reply*, has already spoken about the ridiculous demands on these researchers working for daily entertainment shows. But, as he just now, even on the most important programmes, what impact of a researcher canover between the sub-line, is ridiculous and the downright dangerous.

During a spate of kidnappings of Yemeni television four yrs ago, I was working on *Rao 4's Today*. I remember giggling nervously when a producer asked me to get an English-speaking Yemeni tribal leader on the end of a satellite line for 7.30am the following day. He wasn't joking.

If I had known then what I know now, perhaps I could have booked the leader through the agency that supplied *Trisha* and *The Vaneza Show*. Using traditional research methods, after four hours had to tell the producer that he might have to make do with the Yemeni Ambassador to London. He gave me the

look that every researcher dreads: "You've failed me."

Fear of that look drives most ambitious researchers the extra mile to "deliver" for their immediate boss, even if it means using slightly underhand means. I was so desperate to persuade the former Ulster MP Bernadette McAliskey to appear on *Today* that I casually mentioned the fact that I was black. Using the line from *The Commitments*: "The Irish are the blacks of Europe", certainly does not appear in the producer's guidelines, but it worked. Mrs McAliskey, who was furious with the BBC over her treatment by another programme, agreed to be interviewed by us the following morning.

The look can also push you to take nerve-racking risks. During the Parkhurst prison breakout a few years ago, a man telephoned claiming that he was Norman Parker, a former prison inmate and author of *Parkhurst Tales*. He said the escapees had obviously got their idea from his book about life inside. I had no idea whether he was telling the truth but I took down his details and excitedly passed them on to the duty editor.

"Is he genuine?" I was asked. "Oh, yes," I said, hoping not having even seen the book. It was at the end of a 12-hour shift so there our conversation ended, both of us tacitly assuming that somehow it would get checked — by someone else. A few hours later I listened in terror as Parker gave the presenters an exhilarating account of his time in Parkhurst. What if he was a fake? Thankfully he was genuine. I got a pat on the back, and watched proudly as he did a tour of programmes, including the *One O'Clock News*.

More often than not, researchers who slip up during outlandish quests lack guid-



He wears women's clothes

A genuine guest gives his opinion of cross-dressers on *Trisha*. Researchers are under pressure to weed out hoaxes

ance from producers, who can be strangely reluctant to pass on the benefits of their experience. Researchers ask few questions, fearing they will be deemed "not up to the job". Because there is little or no formal training for the role — it is assumed that you can do it if you have a degree — most people stumble on blindly, praying that one of their hundreds of speculative calls will yield the desired interviewee.

Some years ago I was researching a programme on the Animal Liberation Front for a now defunct current affairs programme. The producer begged me to use my "on the ground" contacts to find a cell of the ALF from which we could interview someone. As any researcher knows, no rule-book can help. I had to plead with journalists who had previously covered the story, stake out suspected hang-

outs of radical vegans and give my home telephone number to anybody remotely connected with animal rights.

After two weeks of frustration I rang an old university friend who had apparently become an eco-warrior. She knew a hunt saboteur who, after some persuading, took my producer, reporter and myself to an Oxfordshire wood to meet three individuals in balaclavas and army fatigues.

But after returning to the office in triumph, I was grilled by the programme editor, who balked at the idea of giving them airtime.

To my dismay he told my producer and me that the ALF could not be interviewed on the ground that they were "terrorists who shouldn't be given the oxygen of publicity".

On another occasion I was

asked to look into "tardive dyskinesia", an unpleasant side-effect of some antipsychotic drugs — a job any researcher could do by consulting the British National Formulary. But my reporter wanted to create a tabloid splash by getting a celebrity to confess that they, or a relative, had been treated with these drugs — and had then been afflicted with tardive dyskinesia.

So off went the speculative letters to high-profile pop stars and actors — all of whom were reputed to have either suffered from mental illness, stress, alcoholism or drug addiction, or to have it in the family. I had no idea whether they had even been treated with antipsychotics, let alone gone on to suffer from TD, but that didn't matter. It was a wild goose chase — one that probably caused the subjects some offence — but to the lowly

researcher, even the most unhinged orders are still orders.

I realised that this was no longer the world for me when I found myself in Birmingham one night sitting in the car of a man whose nickname was "Killer". He told me wild stories about gun-carrying and extreme violence that made him ideal for a BBC item on black-on-black violence. But "Killer" was ruled out by a senior producer because he no longer carried a gun and I could not prove how dangerous he was.

Perhaps it would have helped if I had returned to the office with a bullet-ridden flak jacket or a sawn-off shotgun bearing his fingerprints.

So next time you pity the poor downmarket researcher, spare a thought for their upmarket cousin who is probably just as close to a nervous breakdown — and a P45.

Monica at the heart of a new plot

Nothing sells like a scandal — TV catches on to Washington's dramatic potential for ratings. Report by Susan Karlin

We may think that we have had enough of Monica Lewinsky, but LA thinks not. Her essence will live on in Hollywood, thanks to a new TV series expected to hit the US next autumn. It's called *DC* (it was originally called *Interns*) and it's about young Washington DC interns. Despite the similarities, the WB Network, one of America's newer terrestrial channels, is tiptoeing around the obvious comparisons. "We want to stay away from the Monica thing," says a spokesman. "It's not a thing we want to promote."

The ensemble drama comes from Dick Wolf, creator of *Law & Order*, the Emmy-winning legal and crime drama, and the film writer John August. The WB has ordered a pilot and is expected to announce a series pick-up in the spring. *DC* features tawdry twenty-somethings — this is Hollywood, after all — embarking on low-level jobs in Washington. While Ms Lewinsky isn't expected to make an appearance herself, there will be plenty of sexual intrigue.

Isn't that what good-looking 23 and 24-year-olds do? Wolf joked with reporters at a recent Television Critics Association (TCA) press tour in California. Despite scandal-laced political films such as *Wag the Dog*, TV has tended to shy away from Washington as a backdrop. Shadowing a real scandal in a TV show is tricky as it risks following an already over-saturated media event and often pales beside a real-life counterpart. After the O.J. Simpson trial, Steven Bochco, creator of the TV police series *NYPD Blue*, attempted *Murder One*, a drama cov-

ering a year-long murder trial, which was hugely popular in Britain but lasted only a season in the US.

DC will focus less on politics and more on the ideals, moral choices, and their consequences, of young Senate aides, lobbyists, TV news producers and Supreme Court clerks.

"It's not party-orientated," Wolf told *Daily Variety*, an entertainment trade magazine. "I hope to get through 110 episodes without ever using the words Republican or Democrat. It's no more a political show than *LA Law* was a legal show."

Meanwhile, political scandal also inspired a two-part episode of *Law & Order* this spring. In it, a Kenneth Starr-like prosecutor takes on New York detectives in a plot that evokes images of the circumstances surrounding the real suicide of Vince Foster, the White House lawyer.

"It involves the discovery of a body in New York that looks like a suicide, then isn't, and is tied to the White House," says Wolf. "There is a special prosecutor who wants information that a detective doesn't think he has a right to. I wouldn't say that it evolved from the White House scandal, but it's in the national consciousness. We take the headlines not the body copy."

If *DC* is a success, the WB off half-jokes about controversy. You don't want to drive away advertisers, but nothing promotes a show like a scandal. It was the conservative backlash against *Married... With Children* that helped to put Fox TV on the map. "I don't think *DC*'s going to cause a boycott," jokes The WB's Susanne Daniels. "But I'm going to look for one."

Will we see ads on the BBC?

"ADMEN say no to more ads" is a polite headline for a story involving the resurrection of one of the oldest chestnuts in the UK media scene: a call for the BBC to take ads.

There is being heard at this week's annual British TV advertising sales conference (in Baxton, naturally), and the tale is being led by the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers (ISBA), which represent the nation's advertisers. The issue is never far from the surface at the conference, one of the few platforms to which advocates for such a move have access each year. But ISBA is deadly serious about its call. What lies behind it is advertisers' natural desire to alleviate inflation in the cost of TV advertising airtime.

ISBA is preparing its submission to the Davies Committee on the funding of the BBC. In the past it has argued that some government advertising should be shifted to the corporation and that there should be limited advertising — three minutes a day in peak time, say. Latest proposals will be that the BBC face the same commercial

restraints as ITV.

Agencies have always resisted the ISBA's proposals. Research has found little enthusiasm for such a move, and agencies fear it will make the ad industry appear greedy (greedier) in the public's eyes. Where the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) concurs with the ISBA is in regard to commercial constraints. Agencies and magazine publishers bristle at the way the Beeb cross-promotes its magazines, for instance, and there's the matter of backdoor sponsorship such as the Camelot. So expect much huffing and puffing about ads on the Beeb as the ISBA exerts pressure on agencies to support them, and agencies decline to do so. And there the matter will rest — until next year.

■ TBWA won overall gold at Wednesday's British Television Advertising Awards for



its Sony PlayStation commercial "double life". Other winners included Guinness (the old Italian man in a swimming race), *The Independent* (the cinema commercial "litany"), and Lego. Yellow Pages and Sony Camcorders.

There's nothing terrible about this list of ads: they are well-made and have advertising ideas, but something about



A still from Sony PlayStation's winning ad

the winners bothered a few observers. It's not just that my own favourite, the VW Polo's "self-defence", got silver; it was more how out of kilter this list is with the ads that

py, and the Levi's and Tango series once did, and One 2 One and Walkers crisps do now.

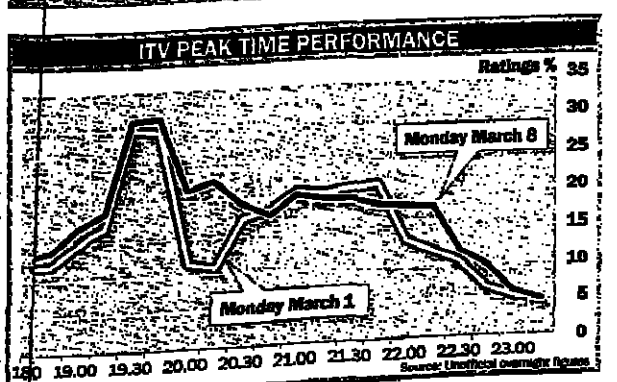
Some formulas are bound to be popular in the living room — celebrities, furry animals and soap opera plots. There is no reason that awards juries should have to laud them just because they are popular. But the great campaigns of the past 25 years have managed to marry critical (ie, industry) acumen with commercial and popular success.

Think back to Hamlet and Heineken, Carling Black Label and BT, Barclaycard and Tesco. That list is probably now headed by Walkers, One 2 One and Volkswagen, which won minor awards on Wednesday night. But there's no room for the likes of Peugeot advertising the public likes, that sells cars in droves, but won't win a creative award — ever.

Next year, we'll probably see the more populist ads winning again. I hope so, because it would be dangerous for the ad industry to be even more self-congratulatory and insulated.

● Stefano Hatfield is the Editor of Campaign.

media voice



ON Monday evening this week ITV unveiled its new evening schedule replacing *News at Ten*. According to unofficial overnight figures, the new *ITV Evening News*, at 6.30pm, slightly outperformed the previous Monday's edition of *News at Ten*. The first, brightly coloured *ITV Evening News* had an audience figure of 7.2 million, compared with 6.9 million for last Monday's *News at Ten*. Previously, ITV's *Early Evening News*, at 5.40pm, drew in around 4.5 million viewers.

Across the evening the rest of the peak-time scheduled ITV programmes also recorded slight weekly increases in their respective time slots. The uninterrupted drama and film slot at

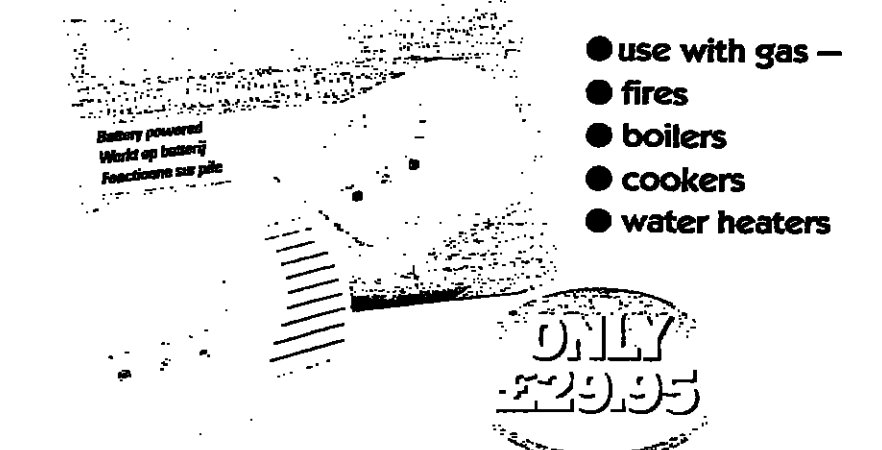
9pm featured *Kavanagh QC*, which gained a 46 per cent (10.3 million) share of viewing.

ITV claims a 48 per cent share of viewing across the whole of the Monday evening; the network's target for this year is to achieve an average 39 per cent of peak-time viewing. The *ITV Nightly News*, at 11pm, was watched by 3.1 million viewers, which is roughly the same for the various different regional programmes shown at 11pm last Monday. *News at Ten* averaged around 5.8 million viewers.

● MediaTel's online media information and analysis service is accessed via the Internet at <http://www.mediatel.co.uk> (0171-439 7575)

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Free postage and packaging on all UK orders. TN087			

CHANGING TIMES

EDUCATION

Are your children ready for this?

Guides can boost revision for national curriculum tests, says John O'Leary

National curriculum tests have assumed great importance and sales of the guides produced jointly by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the Stationery Office and *The Times* have increased rapidly. Many schools now encourage home preparation. All three of the age groups tested nationally are covered by the series of paperback books.

the only ones to include actual questions used in last year's tests. A single guide covers the assessment of seven-year-olds, and there are separate books for English, mathematics and science at 11 and 14. This year's tests begin after Easter, but the guides are best used over an extended period to familiarise pupils with the form of

assessment they can expect. The tests are the nearest that most children will come to a public examination before GCSE. The questions below offer a flavour of the two guides for primary children. The guides sponsored by this newspaper are available in mainstream bookshops, as well as through the offer at the foot of this page.

KEY STAGE ONE: 6-7 YEARS

National testing conjures up an image of nervous children sitting in rows and working furiously. At the age of seven, at least, it is not like that. The assessment regime has been designed to get the most out of children by mirroring normal classroom activity.

The process, which marks the end of Key Stage One of the national curriculum, takes place over several weeks. Although there are formal tests in mathematics, reading and spelling, much of the assessment takes place in small groups with the class teacher. Results in mathematics and spelling improved last year, but children continued to find writing the most difficult of the tasks set. Few used paragraphs, and adjectives and adverbs were rare in seven-year-olds' stories.

Most children coped well with simple words in the spelling test, but they had difficulty with vowel phonemes and double consonants that represent a single sound, such as in "suddenly".

The mathematics test focused mainly on numbers, although there were some questions on data-handling and shapes. Just over half the children could work out the difference between 12 and 16, but fewer than half could calculate the change from 54p after buying five pencils at 10p each. No major changes are planned for this year's tests.

1

I can not swim. I am 7 years old.

I can swim. I am 6 years old.

I can not swim. I am 10 years old.

I can swim. I am 7 years old.

Sam Tina Kim Bill

Write the name of each child in the correct place on the diagram.

can swim	is 7 years old	is not 7 years old
can not swim		

2

It started raining at this time.

It rained for one hour.

Show the time on the clock when it stopped raining.

3

Continue the pattern in the next two circles.



Ann Moss with Charlotte Atkins and Shuabur Rahman of Blue Gate Fields Primary School, East London

4

Anna has 54p.

She buys as many pencils as she can.

pencil 10p

How much money will she have left?

5

Use these numbers

6 7 10 5 9

Which of these numbers are odd?

What is the total of the odd numbers?

KEY STAGE TWO: 10-11 YEARS

The tests marking the end of Key Stage Two of the national curriculum are the most sensitive set by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority because of their use in primary school league tables. But they come too late in the year to be used for secondary school selection, or even the allocation of sets in most comprehensive schools. Eleven-year-olds encounter their first science tests, but English and, particular-

ly, mathematics cause more problems. In spite of some improvement in results, only 65 per cent reached the expected Level 4 in English last year, while the success rate for mathematics slipped back to 59 per cent.

The new mental arithmetic test presented most difficulty. The 20 questions became progressively harder, and written work was discouraged but not penalised. Multiplication caused problems in the written tests but children were more se-

cure when it came to addition and subtraction.

As at the earlier stage, 11-year-olds did better at reading than writing in the spelling test, vowels caused most difficulty, especially in irregular words such as special and journey.

Children were more successful in science: 69 per cent reached the expected level for their age. As in maths and English, this year's tests will be similar to those set in 1998.

6

2700 people go to a sports event. Each person pays £2.20 for a ticket. What is the total amount of ticket money collected?

7

Shanez buys a pack of 24 cans of cola for £5.00.

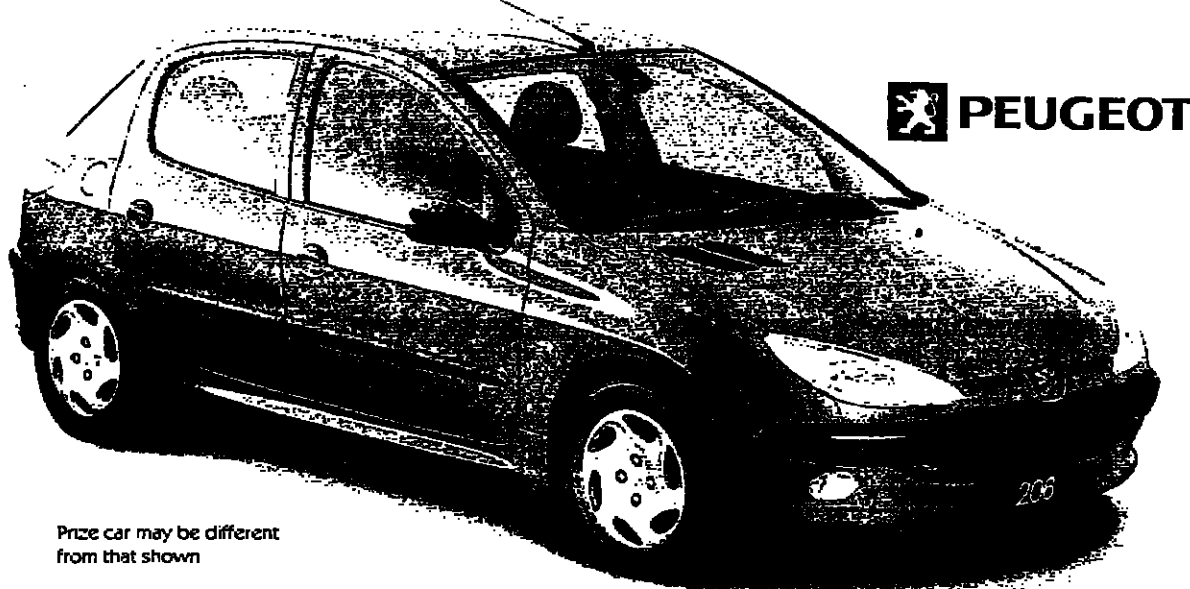
What is the cost of each can?

THE ANSWERS

1. Sam: I can not swim. I am 7 years old. Tina: I can swim. I am 6 years old. Kim: I can not swim. I am 10 years old. Bill: I can swim. I am 7 years old.
2. The clock should show ten to seven.
3. See below.
4. Four pence.
5. Odd numbers are 5, 7, 9. Total 21.
6. Total ticket money collected is £5,940. Programmes sold: 943.
7. Each can costs 25 pence.



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- A trip for two to see the Corrs in New York on St Patrick's Day
- A trip for two to see the 2000 Australian Grand Prix
- A drum kit signed by Queen's Roger Taylor

Calls cost £1, of which 65p goes to Comic Relief. The more times you enter, the more money goes to the charity. *Prize of a Peugeot 206 does not include insurance. No cash alternative. Promoter: Virgin Radio

See *The Times* next week for your chance to win thousands of Free Books for Schools tokens

CHANGING TIMES

Why



John O'Leary

'I was hard on my rare'

There is growing becoming too co

U

short break... with a... life of a... City... posed... 16-year-old... Traditionally... been the great... die... there is evidence... many... may be more... system where... can be started... est... victims of a culture... seeking perfection.

Eighteen-year-old... zhussein, whose... begins this... bright and ambitious... student who attends... leading schools in the... Midlands. Since... she has been studying... eral hours a night. And... week she works through... night. Sam does not... such practices... these are merely the... habits she picked up... her GCSEs.

"In my fourth year in... lar," she recalls, "I... hard that I rarely... making myself ill. Even... my form teacher did... to find out how much... were doing on top of... sons and the average... hours a week. She told... calm down."

Sam and her friends... fused to accept this... because the pressure to perform

Beam

A school has linked up with space, says Iola Smith

Russian cosmonauts have performed some unusual tasks during the turbulent lifetime of the Mir space station. But it is safe to assume that they never expected to be opening a Welsh comprehensive.

Later this month the orbiting craft will declare the rebuilt Stanwell School in Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan, officially open. The message will be received at the school by Yuri Glazkov, a cosmonaut from Moscow's Star City, and George Abbey, the director of Nasa. Both dress staff and students as part of the space project.

The school's interest in space began in 1994 when Geoff Mules, turned-Tevan-businessman, de- offer a bursary to allow sixth-form visit Nasa's space centre at Houston. Richard Palmer, an A-level who spent part of last summer in says: "We were taken around control, the astronaut training and Nasa's observatories. We e a chance to use the simulators come a 'challenge' on mission such as piloting a craft with a component through space and Earth's atmosphere."

Richard was one of only a few able to experience how first hand, Chris Barber, Stanwell's head teacher, was keen for pupils to benefit from the Nasa tion and so, as Stanwell's rela-

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THE TIMES

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Why the Government needs mature students



The first clues to Labour's plans for the next Parliament emerged this week with the news that civil servants were examining the feasibility of half the population experiencing higher education by the age of 30. As big ideas go, it is pretty modest because up to 45 per cent of the age group already sample university or college courses. But it is a pointer to government thinking.

With mature students suffering from the introduction of tuition fees, graduate employment shaky and questions being asked about course quality, the benefits of further expansion can no longer be taken for granted. But the thinking that lay be-

hind this week's Budget investment in "computers for all" also suggests that as many people as possible should take higher qualifications.

We may question whether the nation needs a further injection of sociology graduates or engineers, but even the current expansion of higher education is not about more of the same. The extra numbers planned at present are mostly in sub-degree courses for technicians and clerical workers, and often based in further education colleges rather than universities.

The longer-term model under consideration by David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, is designed to revive

recruitment among mature students by combining full and part-time study in a new way. Part-time numbers have continued to grow at a time when the new fees have made older students think twice about taking a degree. A relatively short full-time introductory course followed by a longer period of part-time study would spread the costs more widely and might be seen as the best of both worlds by people who cannot afford a lengthy career break.

Unless there is a transformation in public attitudes to education, however, even such limited expansion of the university system will require some stimulation of demand. Predictably enough, students are becoming

more hard-headed about the courses they take since the introduction of tuition fees. Although the new courses would probably be largely vocational, many of the twenty-somethings the Government wants to attract will not have the necessary qualifications to benefit.

Conversion courses for those wanting to switch academic track and access courses for those who never got on to the track in the first place will be central to meeting the Government's target. But are they a serious preparation for higher education, or merely a way of covering up the poor quality of the intake at some universities?

A report published yesterday by

the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is reassuringly positive. Not only does it signal new controls on the standard of access courses, but it finds that most have done well for their students. There is no information on the class of degree awarded to former access course students, but the report finds that they have been no more likely to fail or drop out than those entering by the conventional route.

First introduced 20 years ago, these access courses now involve more than 14,000 students. The subjects that access students choose subsequently tend to be those of national shortage, making the courses even more important in the future

planning of ministers. About 85 per cent go on to degree programmes, most commonly in nursing, social work, teacher-training or computing. Almost all the students are over 21 and a higher proportion than on other courses come from ethnic minorities and poor families.

The QAA's new recognition scheme, which sets out to ensure that students reach a suitable standard for entry to higher education, should weed out the minority of courses that have put quantity above quality. If that can be guaranteed, many of the critics of expanded entry to higher education will be silenced and the Government's targets will be realistic.

'I worked so hard during my GCSEs, I rarely slept'

There is growing evidence that many pupils are becoming too competitive, writes Hannah Betts

Up at 7am. At work by 8. Home at 5pm. With family until 7. Work until 1.30 — short break — continue work to 3 in the morning. This is not the description of a day in the life of a merchant banker or City lawyer, but the self-imposed timetable of an industrious 16-year-old GCSE student.

Traditionally, A levels have been the great intellectual hurdle facing schoolchildren. But there is evidence that, for many youngsters, GCSEs may be more strenuous. In a system where even A grades can be started, Britain's brightest 16-year-olds are becoming victims of a culture increasingly seeking perfection.

Eighteen-year-old Satim Razhusein, whose daily schedule begins this article, is a bright and ambitious A-level student who attends one of the leading schools in the West Midlands. Since Christmas, she has been studying for several hours a night. And twice a week she works through the night. Satim does not consider such practices exceptional; these are merely the working habits she picked up during her GCSEs.

was internal. "No one made us work that hard," she adds. "My parents were worried, but there was nothing they could do: I would just shut my door and get on with it."

Satim gained ten As in her GCSEs, including five with stars, but still thinks that she could have achieved more.

Such anecdotal evidence that GCSEs are becoming the great testing point in a child's school career is supported by evidence from ChildLine, the national helpline for distressed children. Of those young people phoning about exam stress who declared their age, 61 per cent were in the GCSE age group. In contrast, 17-year-olds made up only 7 per cent of the statistic, and 18-year-olds, the age at which A levels are usually taken, only 4 per cent. In the aftermath of their traumatic GCSEs, many pupils appear to take A levels in their stride.

children it has merely extended what could be termed perfection anxiety across two years. Some parents link this pressure with inter-school competition brought on by league tables. This has led to accusations that some schools may be encouraging children to give up subjects in which they are expected to do less well because their performance may blot an otherwise perfect record. Other parents accuse schools of making over-optimistic GCSE predictions to spur students on to the highest levels of achievement.

Schooled on the quick sprint of O level, parents can find themselves bemused by the mania that comes with GCSE stress. Jane Meades has watched three offspring sit GCSEs at comprehensives in St Albans.

"There is a lot of pressure now," she says. "Originally, it was confined to the competitive atmosphere at a few schools, but it's all of them now. And GCSE time can be hellish, with teachers thinking that their subject is the important one. As a parent, you feel helpless. I did have anxieties that they were overdoing it."

Parents used to become alert to these problems only as the exam season approaches. ChildLine's calls rise steadily from January. Help is also at hand from the Parent Network, a national organisation offering parenting education to 2,000 people a year. ChildLine has produced a leaflet that gives children rational advice on exam preparation. A supporting booklet, *Stressed*

Student desire to achieve the coveted starred As is exacerbated by the fact that GCSEs are the only firm results for universities to use when offering places ahead of A level. For courses such as law and medicine, they have become a prerequisite. At the same time, bright children can overestimate the standards required to reach this level. Until the results of her mocks, Satim was convinced that she was going to get disastrous grades.

Continuous assessment may have been designed to remove the pressure from end-of-course exams, but for many



Are our children becoming victims of a culture increasingly seeking perfection? Parents are often worried by the mania that comes with GCSE stress

Out, offers advice to parents with sections on emotional support, danger signals and life beyond revision.

Valerie Howarth, the chief executive of ChildLine, summarises the problem: "Many GCSE pupils think that their whole future is swinging in the balance and some become suicidal. Children as young as 12 are calling the service with anxieties that their performance when it comes to GCSEs won't be good enough."

Children can call ChildLine on 0800 1111. For a free copy of Exam Stress and How to Beat It, contact ChildLine, Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR. The Parent Network is on 0171-735-1214. edpage@the-times.co.uk

Beam the class up, Nasa

A school has linked up with space, says Iola Smith

Russian cosmonauts have performed some unusual tasks during the turbulent lifetime of the Mir space station. But it is safe to assume that they never expected to be opening a Welsh comprehensive.

Later this month the orbiting craft will declare the rebuilt Stanwell School in Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan, officially open. The message will be received at the school by Yuri Glazkov, a cosmonaut from Moscow's Star City, and George Abey, the director of Nasa. Both will address staff and students as part of Stanwell's space project.

The school's interest in space dates back to 1994 when Geoff Mules, old-boy-turned-Texan-businessman, decided to offer a bursary to allow sixth-formers to visit Nasa's space centre at Houston.

Richard Palmer, an A-level student who spent part of last summer in Texas, says: "We were taken around mission control, the astronaut training centre and Nasa's observatories. We even had a chance to use the simulators to overcome a 'challenge' at mission control such as piloting a craft with a broken component through space and into the Earth's atmosphere."

Richard was one of only a few students able to experience Houston at first hand. Chris Barber, Stanwell's deputy-head teacher, was keen for all 1,400 pupils to benefit from the Nasa connection, and so, as Stanwell's relationship



Mission control: Richard Palmer with fellow pupils

with the space centre deepened, he hit on the idea of using the Internet to link the school with Nasa in a new way. So this term, Mr Barber and Mr Mules will launch a charity, the International Space School Foundation, at Stanwell.

Mr Barber explains: "We thought that Nasa's vast database could prove useful as a teaching tool in geography, science and psychology. But the difficulty would be trawling through the acres of material to find facts that would be relevant for, say, a 14-year-old studying volcanoes."

With assistance from the charity, the school will be able to establish a virtual exchange centre with Nasa. Teachers and technicians will be able to go through Nasa's data to extract features that are relevant for the national curriculum. The material, graded according to difficulty and tailored to the needs of specific age groups, will then be put on the Net to make it accessible to schools

worldwide. Doorway to the Universe will be structured as a journey through space, stopping at locations that will include the Earth, the Moon and the planets. There will be opportunities to compare features such as radiation and volcanic activity between Earth and the Moon. Students of geography and environmental science, with their focus on Earth, will be able to take advantage of Nasa's picture library of Earth, with its quarter of a million photographs covering everything from hurricanes to the effects of El Niño.

Once the material goes on the Net, Stanwell hopes that other schools will use it, adding topics that they have been studying. "Our target," Mr Barber says, "is to have 2,000 schools using it by next year. We already have interest from schools in Britain and the United States."

Stanwell has long had electronic links with pupils in Sioux City, Iowa. Schoolchildren undertake joint research projects with their American e-mail penfriends and learn about each other's culture.

Enabling more pupils to experience a Nasa visit is the final part of Stanwell's space project. The hope is that, for the millennium, a planel of British students comprising Stanwell pupils and others who have contributed to the Net pages will go to Texas, and students from participating American schools will visit Britain.

In the long term, as the international space station comes to fruition, expected experiments devised by British schoolchildren may be tested on board.

MEL'S DIRTY TRICKS

"I find gallows humour hysterical."

Mel Gibson, interviewed in **CULTURE** this Sunday, relishes the chance to main and founder in his new film **Payback**

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THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

HOCKEY

Clewlów can make crucial difference

By Cathy Harris and Sydney Friskin

DENIS BAKER, the Canterbury coach, believes Mel Clewlów, the England defender, could be the key to the Kent women's club gaining promotion to the premier division. Canterbury have never played at the highest level, but if they beat Bradford in their final national league fixture tomorrow, they will be promoted as first-division champions.

Baker, the England Under-16 coach, admits that Canterbury have secured their place at the head of the table through "good, solid team performances from everyone", but picks out Clewlów, the centre back, "She's fitter and faster than I've ever seen her and her vision and delivery of the long ball have been superb," Baker said.

With 14 goals to her credit, second behind Tina Cullen, of Hightown, Clewlów's tally of 12 penalty corners is easily the best strike-rate in the league.

With four matches yet to be played in the men's national league, premier division, Cannock are five points clear at the top of the table and seem a safe bet to finish there. The main obstacles in Cannock's path are out of the way. The three other teams in contention for the top four places are Southgate, Canterbury and Reading.

Reading, still without the injured Wyatt, will visit Old Loughtonians on Sunday with the same side that defeated Canterbury 6-3 last week.

With only two matches remaining in the first division, there should be an exciting race to finish in the top eight in order to survive in the division when the league is restructured next season.

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) announced yesterday that Perth is to host the women's 2002 World Cup, with Kuala Lumpur staging the men's. Amsterdam is the venue for the 2000 men's and women's Champions Trophy.

Stains preaches the gospel of positivity

Rugby league hopes are rising in London, Christopher Irvine finds

In his office at the Stoop Memorial Ground, the electricity had gone off, but Dan Stains was oblivious to the cold. He had been up since 2am working on training ideas for his London Broncos side and was itching to get outdoors.

"Everywhere you go, always take the weather with you," the Australian grinned. "That song came to mind at Hull Kingston Rovers, where an icy gale and belligerent lower-division opponents almost scuppered London's advance to the Silk Cut Challenge Cup quarter-finals. "It made me realise what a good team we've got, because Hull KR would have beaten anyone. It was blowing 40mph off the sea, it was their Wembley, and we had to find a way out," Stains said.

Martin Offiah located the escape route with the only try in a grinding 6-0 win. As well as the restoration of Offiah's scoring prowess after a protracted injury, Stains knew, too, that his instinct in handing the captaincy to Shaun Edwards had been right.

"There were times at Hull when we could have cracked, but Shaun kept us going," Stains said. "He's a powerful person and a natural leader." The driven features of Edwards at training are not the only difference at the club since the charismatic Stains, 34, from Balmain, arrived in January. Trevor Howard, the club's long-serving football manager, said: "The place has never been as charged, nor the players quite so together, as under Dan."

His religious beliefs, of which much have been

made, are not thrust down players' throats, though positive fervour abounds, and if they did not appreciate it before, the principle of sowing and reaping is ingrained. Stains said: "The intuitive side of competition is what spirituality is about. When acting on instinct, you're acting on what I believe is your God inside you. It's why I don't plan too far ahead. "I believe I was destined to be here. Part of my mission is to establish rugby league in London. We are building towards the vision of a dominant club. I don't set goals,

"We are building towards the vision of a dominant club"

but we can win the Super League this year, because we have the team to beat Wigan, Leeds, and the rest."

After a semi-final appearance last year and a season in which generally they flattered to deceive, Broncos' approach has been more low-key and their signings less flashy. The gradual anglicising of the club has continued with ten of the 25 squad now British.

Karl Hammond, from St Helens, forms a homegrown half-back combination with Edwards, while Dominic

Peters, Wayne Sykes, James Brooks and Ed Jennings (the first rugby league player to emerge from the Isle of Wight) have been brought in from the development ranks.

Stains, who grew up on a dairy farm on the Darling Downs of Queensland, is a product of the outstanding Australian junior system. As a second-row forward, he represented Queensland and Australia and caught the bug for the British game during a six-month spell at Halifax in 1988, "when the Broncos were Fulham and looked upon as the backside of England in rugby league terms."

He pushed for the London job and was pleasantly surprised on his arrival. "The professional administration here is way ahead of many Sydney clubs, which have been propped up by poker-machine money, especially in marketing and development," he said.

"Australia is only ahead of England because of its junior development. London fights to get every kid playing. It's slowly succeeding. My vision is for a strong junior base in which we can eventually hand-pick London kids to play for London," he said.

Victory in the home cup-tie against Whitehaven on Sunday would leave the Broncos and Richard Branson, their chairman, one step from Wembley. "To strut my stuff there," Stains said, "would be something special." Worth the 2am start, certainly.



Stains has the contentment of a man in control of affairs. Photograph: Andre Camara

Whitakers appear secure

By Jenny MacArthur

With Virtual Village Welham now resting, Whitaker will rely on Heyman on Sunday. "He hasn't done a grand prize this year but he's been to a couple of shows and is jumping well," Whitaker said of the ten-year-old gelding. If he does qualify, he will

use Heyman in the final and possibly Grannusch, the 19-year-old on which he won the first two legs of the final last year, followed by the Olympia qualifier in December.

Billington will ride his best horse, Virtual Village It's Otto, on which he was third in Paris last year. Having been as low as joint 34th a month

ago, he has climbed to eleventh by virtue of good performances in Bordeaux and Bologna last month.

Michael Whitaker, who is lying third, with 43 points, is virtually assured of his place in Gothenburg. His consistent performances this season include third place at both Millstreet and Olympia. "I'm pleased to have the pressure of qualifying lifted, but I'd like to win one," he said. On Sunday, he will ride either Virtual Village Ashley or Hilton, who improves with each outing.

SNOOKER

Hendry's good practice pays off

FROM PHIL YATES IN SHANGHAI

STEPHEN HENDRY and Billy Snaddon, who for the past eight years have practised together regularly at Spencers Snooker Centre, Stirling, will meet 6,500 miles away in the semi-finals of the China International here tomorrow. Hendry, who edged Steve Davis 5-4 on the black in the last 16, improved his play during a 5-2 victory over John Parrott, while Snaddon achieved a personal best in a world-ranking event by unexpectedly beating Stephen Lee 5-3.

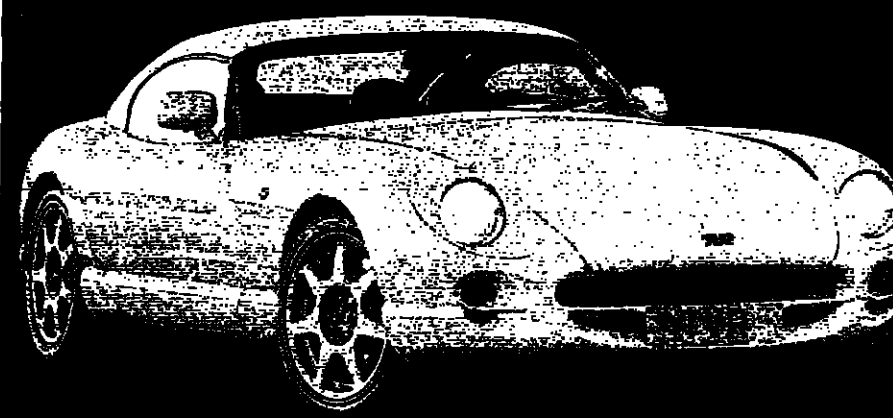
"That's probably my best performance of the season," Hendry, who won the Scottish Open last month, said. "I can't remember missing an important ball from distance."

Parrott failed to score in four frames as Hendry displayed ominous sharpness. The fourth, which gave the Scot a 3-1 lead at the mid-session interval, was of particular significance. Parrott built a 51-0 advantage before Hendry potted a long red to initiate a clearance of 87.

"When you scrape through a match you should have lost, like I did against Steve, it tends to relax you and that's how I felt out there," Hendry, who compiled a break of 107 in the sixth frame, said.

Snaddon's break-building was more modest but the result was paramount for the world No 32, who is now guaranteed £11,000, the biggest cheque of a professional career that began in 1991. The possibility of Scottish players monopolising the semi-final places remains after a 5-4 win for Alan McManus over Mark King in the second round. He plays Ken Doherty today, while in the remaining quarter-final John Higgins meets Paul Davies, the world No 41. Davies, from Cardiff, recovered from 2-0 and 58-0 adrift in the third frame to defeat Mark Williams, winner of the Thai Masters in Bangkok on Sunday, 5-2.

AN EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION



WIN A £40,000 TVR

Plus £15,000 in cash prizes and Grand Prix trips for runners-up

The Fantasy Formula One results of the Australian Grand Prix appear below with Eddie Irvine leading the drivers on 153 points and Arrows heading the constructors with 21 points. J. Kilmartin of Maidenhead, Berks, wins a pair of four-day passes to this year's British Grand Prix. His team, Prancers 9, scored 818 points in Melbourne and comprised M. Schumacher, Irvine, Fisichella, R. Schumacher, Frentzen and Takagi for the drivers and Ferrari,

Benetton, Williams, Arrows, BAR and Stewart for the constructors. The winner of our fantasy title will drive away at the end of the season in a TVR Cerbera, valued at over £40,000. Second prize is £10,000 plus a trip for two to the 2000 Monaco Grand Prix. Third prize is £5,000 plus a pair of four-day passes to the 2000 British Grand Prix. To enter a team for the Brazilian GP, which offers up to 600 bonus points, or to make transfers, see details below

AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX RESULTS

DRIVERS: Qualifying points (scored by qualifying for the start of each grand prix within the first 20 positions on the grid): Pole M. Hakkinen 30 points; 2nd D. Coulthard 25; 3rd M. Schumacher 24; 4th R. Barrichello 23; 5th H. Frentzen 22; 6th E. Irvine 21; 7th G. Fisichella 20; 8th R. Schumacher 19; 9th D. Hill 18; 10th A. Wurz 17; 11th J. Villeneuve 16; 12th J. Trulli 15; 13th J. Herbert 14; 14th P. Diniz 13; 15th A. Zanardi 12; 16th J. Alesi 11; 17th T. Takagi 10; 18th P. de la Rosa 9; 19th R. Zonta 8; 20th O. Panis 7. **Finishing points** (scored for the top 20 classified positions at the end of every grand prix): 1st E. Irvine 60 points; 2nd H. Frentzen 50; 3rd R. Schumacher 40; 4th G. Fisichella 30; 5th R. Barrichello 29; 6th P. de la Rosa 28; 7th T. Takagi 27; 8th M. Schumacher 26. (Only 8 were classified.) **Lap points** (one point for each lap completed): E. Irvine 57 points; H. Frentzen 57; R. Schumacher 57; G. Fisichella 57; R. Barrichello 57; P. de la Rosa 57; T. Takagi 57; M. Schumacher 56; R. Zonta 48; A. Badoer 42; A. Wurz 28; P. Diniz 27; M. Gene 25; J. Trulli 25; O. Panis 23; M. Hakkinen 21; A. Zanardi 20; D. Coulthard 13; J. Villeneuve 13. **Improvement from starting grid to finishing position** (3 points for each improved place): P. de la Rosa 36 points; T. Takagi 30; E. Irvine 15; R. Schumacher 15; H. Frentzen 9; G. Fisichella 9. **Fastest lap time of grand prix** M. Schumacher 10 points. **Penalty points** Incident resulting in a driver being made to start from back of grid or pit lane (10 points deducted): M. Schumacher -10 points; R. Barrichello -10. **Did not finish the race** (10 points deducted): R. Zonta -10 points; L. Badoer -10; A. Wurz -10; P. Diniz -10; M. Gene -10; J. Trulli -10; O. Panis -10; M. Hakkinen -10; A. Zanardi -10; D. Coulthard -10; J. Villeneuve -10; D. Hill -10; J. Alesi -10. **Not starting after qualifying** (10 points deducted): J. Herbert -10 points. **Speeding in the pit lane** (5 points deducted): none. **CONSTRUCTORS:** **Finishing points** (scored for the first car only in the top 20 positions at the end of every grand prix): Ferrari 30 points; Jordan 25; Williams 24; Benetton 23; Stewart 22; Arrows 21. **Penalty points** Incident resulting in a car being made to start from back of grid or pit lane (10 points deducted): Ferrari -10 points; Stewart -10. **Elimination of a car during the race** (10 points deducted): McLaren -20 points; Prost -20; Sauber -20; Minardi -20; BAR -20; Jordan -10; Williams -10; Benetton -10. **Not starting after qualifying** (10 points deducted): Stewart -10 points. **Speeding in the pit lane** (5 points deducted): none.

BONUS POINTS apply to six grands prix during the 1999 Formula One championship, the first of which is the Brazilian GP. **Correctly predicting winning driver:** 100 points; **second place:** 200 points; **third place:** 300 points

THE PRIZES

STAR PRIZE The manager with the top score on our fantasy leaderboard after the final race of the season will win a £41,100 TVR Cerbera, plus a VIP trip for two to any GP next season. **2ND PRIZE** £10,000 plus a VIP trip for two to the 2000 Monaco GP. **3RD PRIZE** £5,000 plus a pair of four-day passes to the 2000 British GP. **INDIVIDUAL RACE WINNERS** The manager of the team that scores the most points in each GP will win a pair of four-day passes, with centre transfer, for the 1999 or 2000 British Grands Prix, courtesy of Silverstone.

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TO ENTER BY PHONE

Readers in the UK and Republic of Ireland must call 0640 67 88 88 (+44 870 901 4206 from RoI). Calls last about seven minutes and must be made by Touch-tone telephone. Follow the instructions and tap in your 12 two-digit selections in turn. The order in which you register your first three drivers will be your predictions for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd finishing places for the grands prix where bonus points apply. Then give your team name (up to 16 characters) and details. You can enter until noon on Thursday, April 8, 1999 to qualify for the Brazilian Grand Prix.

TO ENTER BY POST

Complete the form, right, with your 12 two-digit selections. The order in which you register your first three drivers will be your predictions for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd finishing places for the grands prix where bonus points apply.

MAKE THREE SELECTIONS FROM EACH OF THE FOUR GROUPS BELOW

The column of figures after the names below, shows the Fantasy Formula One race scores for the Australian Grand Prix

DRIVERS				CONSTRUCTORS			
GROUP A		GROUP B		GROUP C		GROUP D	
01 M Hakkinen	41	07 E Irvine	153	12 R Schumacher	131	19 J Trulli	30
02 M Schumacher	106	08 O Panis	20	13 H Frentzen	130	19 R Barrichello	99
03 D Hill	8	09 G Fisichella	116	14 A Wurz	35	20 P Diniz	30
04 D Coulthard	22	10 J Alesi	1	15 T Takagi	124	21 P de la Rosa	130
05 A Zanardi	28	11 J Herbert	4	16 R Zonta	46	22 L Badoer	32
06 J Villeneuve	19			17 Marc Gené	15		

FANTASY FORMULA ONE 24-HOUR ENTRY LINE: 0640 67 88 88
+44 870 901 4206 from the Irish Republic 0640 calls cost 60p per minute (standard tariffs apply to +44 870 calls)

TRANSFERS

You can make a total of 12 transfers. Each transfer allows you to change one selection. You can make up to four transfers with each call. For the Brazilian GP call 0640 678 801 (+44 870 901 4240 ex UK) before noon on Thursday April 7 with your 10-digit PIN to hand. Your new team must have three selections from each of groups A, B, C and D.

RESULTS SERVICE

BY PHONE: check the score and position of your team(s) after the Australian race by calling 0640 622 178 (+44 870 901 4278 ex UK) with your 10-digit PIN. **BY FAX:** have your 10-digit PIN ready, pick up the handset on your fax, or press the on-hook or telephone button, and dial 0991 123 714. Follow the instructions. You will receive details of your race score, the points for your drivers and constructors and your position on our leaderboard. Calls cost £1 per minute and are available in the UK only. If you have any problems, call the helpline on 0171-412 3795

THE TIMES NATWEST FANTASY FORMULA ONE ENTRY FORM

Complete this form with your credit-card details, or enclose a sterling cheque for £3 payable to Fantasy Formula One. (For readers resident outside the UK and Republic of Ireland the fee is £15.) Post it to: The Times Fantasy Formula One, Abacus House, Dudley Street, Luton LU1 1ZZ. Your entry must be received by Wednesday, April 7, 1999 to qualify for the Brazilian GP

GROUP A AND GROUP B DRIVERS

1st	2nd	3rd

GROUP C AND GROUP D CONSTRUCTORS

Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms
SURNAME INITIALS AGE

Address _____

Postcode _____ Day tel _____

Credit Card Payment Card number: _____

Expiry date _____ MasterCard _____ Visa _____

Name on card _____

Supply address of registered cardholder on a separate sheet of paper if different from that above

Signature _____ Date _____

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- Which National Sunday Newspaper(s) do you buy almost always (3-4 copies per month)?

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Bobbing and weaving as the press box clever



Quiet mood of contemplation: Holyfield looks towards his task against Lewis at Madison Square Garden tomorrow night with a hint of apprehension. Photograph: Marc Aspland

**FROM SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT,
IN NEW YORK**

Boxers can grow old suddenly in the course of a contest, as Jack Dempsey did at the age of 32 against Gene Tunney, to be followed by others such as Bob Fister, 36, against Jorge Ahumada, 37, Brown, 36, against Carlos Ortiz, Sugar Ray Leonard, 34, against Terry Norris and, nearer home, Joe Napoles, 33, against John Stracey — and that after Napoles had

"I'm not pushing that too much for this fight, but it could happen at any time because I know that all the punches Evander has taken will have their effect one day.

"Beatings are not good for you. They might make you a warrior and give you recognition, but they take their toll, for sure.

"Muhammad Ali, good as

What I could have told the cameraman is that it was Lewis who was driven away from the Garden, because inside the theatre of Madison Square, above the sprawling and unlovely Pennsylvania station, Holyfield was fulfilling his obligation to update the Evander Holyfield website.

hypocrite?"

"If somebody says something and does something different, to me that sounds like hypocrisy," Lewis responds. "It is preposterous that he is saying he will knock me out in three rounds and I was just trying to say that, if he's truly religious, why is he breaking the Commandments every second?"

Presumably a reference to Holyfield's confession that five of his nine children were born out of wedlock to different women. That ought to have



1971, when Muhammad Ali took on Joe Frazier in the Garden, the capacity crowd of 20,455 paid a "live" take of \$1.3 million and the pay-per-view television, relayed to 35 cinemas, amassed \$20 million more, so that the pugilists could each take home \$25 million. The entrepreneurs took much of the fat, presumably

Only the numbers seem to change. When Don King the promoter, is in full, demeaning flow, trampling over many of the world's troubles to drum up his business, it has all the effect at close quarters of standing in front of a black drum, *Vibes* in 62, and

cut a ridiculous caricature of Englishness: mannequin in size, dwarfed by King, he was dressed from head to toe in the colours of the Union Jack and beneath his squashed flat cap, also in red, white and blue, he looked every inch a stray street-urchin out of Dickens.

The boxers may not have the personality of Ali, obviously not the intellect of Einstein, but, for however long it takes on Saturday, the sporting world on both sides of the Atlantic will be drawn to them. Even the cameraman will know which is which, particularly if one remains vertical while the other is horizontal. And then the darkness will resume.

Sometimes, in the privacy of my hotel room, I make a pair of puny fists, turn the mirrors to the wall and bounce around on the balls of my feet, trying to anticipate how the bout will go. *Jab, jab, jab, toof, toof. Hook, hook, hook, toof, oops, fell over.* But it's not much use.

fighters each gave us a wave, while to the left (for no apparent reason) Anthony and Cleopatra stood in full Vegas rig-out — Cleopatra adding to the usual authentic Egyptian lapis lazuli headdress several dusty-yellow ostrich feathers, which regrettably made her look more like a showgirl than

I have heard so much about Lewis's jab that I've simply got to see it in action, even though I still deplore the whole bloody business. I also feel a faint urge to see one of these two champs buy a one-way ticket to Palookaville, and I never thought I'd say that in my life.

So the expertise is shaping up. I now know a "knockover" is not an easy heist in a post office and an "undercard" is not a novice Leslie Phillips. Did you know that "up to scratch" is a term derived from boxing? It turns out that in the 1740s a line was scratched across the centre of boxing arenas. Rounds ended in those days only when a man was knocked down. Whether to embark on another round depended on whether the contestants could both make it to the scratch; if they couldn't, the fight was over. Ask me anything, go on. But if you'll excuse me — jab, jab, feint, *toof, toof* — I've got some research to do.

The cuts were instigated a review by administrators, who over the running of the club at the beginning of the week when Ablett withdrew his financial support. Players have also accepted reductions in salary of either 10 or 20 per cent, depending on levels of income. A claim is Ben Clarke, the captain: "You have to lead by example," Clarke said yesterday. "It has been an easy week for anyone, but we have to put that behind us as far as possible in the club."

GO

James ride art of capta

FROM MEL W.

FROM the day that Mark James was announced as the Europe Ryder Cup captain it was obvious that he would bring to the post a different style to that of his predecessors. In the lead-up to the match Severiano Ballesteros grew increasingly impatient James did not. During the Ryder Cup itself, Ballesteros went on number and you had an air of tension; James, by contrast, did everything at his own unhurried pace.

The contrast in approach was highlighted during yesterday when it was announced that James, having just had a golf, put himself in perfect playing place with 11 others on the PGA España Masters at the Pinar de Mágina del Golf, near Jaén.

Bickerton has compiled three top-ten finishes to date from a lowly 1984 eighth place in the European order of merit and on to the fringe of the top seven in the Ryder Cup points list—and somebody wondered if James had asked to play with him to run his magazines.

"I certainly didn't," he said.

"In fact, I'm determined that as

BADMINTON

BIRMINGHAM: All-England championships: Men: Singles: First round - Mike Chadwick (Wals) beat M. Mansoor (Hull) 15-12, 15-11; G. Burdett (Not.) beat J. Frost (Engl.) 9-11, 15-10; A. Jackson (Dev.) beat R. Emmerton (Hudd.) 15-6, 15-7; A. Redden (Don.) beat B. King (Engl.) 10-12, 15-8.

[illegible]

SKI **SNOW R**

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مكتبة من الأهل

Football's new luvvies wrong to view Eighties as decayed

For the past fortnight a series of highfalutin, highly intellectual debates under the title "Edge Of A Dream" have been taking place at the Royal Festival Hall. It's been an attempt to analyse "the cultural and stylistic impact of the 1980s" with the likes of Andrew Marr and Polly Toynbee, Peter York and Bill Buford, Blake Morrison and Andrew Motion.

Despite covering almost every base from fashion to literature, pop to politics, there was not a single seminar on the great game. (Especially strange given that, at the end of the Eighties, Buford wrote *Among The Thugs*, the most risibly silly bit of soccer slumming ever attempted by an American academic in Doc Martens and arguably the first sign of the literati and the luvvies noticing what millions of ordinary souls actually did every Saturday.)

We've had the Eighties pop revival with Duran Duran, Culture Club and Heaven 17, so it's about time we reassessed the footballing decade that dare not speak its name. The Sixties are endlessly mythologised. The Seventies — sideburns, long hair, Chopper Harris, Leeds United *et al.* — are seen as some misty-eyed golden age. Yet for some reason (OK, Heyes and Hillsborough are both very good reasons), the Eighties are rarely celebrated, despite the fact that the tightest shorts worn in public outside of the annual Gay Pride Parade were sported week in, week out.

Certainly one of the good things about the Eighties is that it was a time when supporters were infinitely better dressed than players. Which is surely as it should be. These days, football is horribly fashionable and its stars appear in

fashion shows and dress in Armani while fans are woefully inelegant. A dozen years ago, though, footballers wore shell-suits and football was deemed profoundly un-chic. Yet the fans were immaculate. You didn't see flocks of sheep donning acrylic replica strips designed by the chairman's sister-in-law. Instead the terraces (remember those?) were the catwalks of the masses as style wars were fought out by legions of narcissistic casuals boasting the latest *de rigueur* designer duds. (Often "liberated" during continental shopping sprees that coincided with European games.)

The reason that such vicious sartorial battles took place in our charmingly antique and bijou stadiums is actually that

the violence, usually considered to have been an Eighties problem, had largely subsided by then, at least inside the grounds.

It was actually in the late Sixties and Seventies that the football ghettos were at their most perilous. By the Eighties the hordes of consenting juveniles, who posed and preened on the

archetypes ever soiled their flared denims by venturing to something as thoroughly déclassé as a football match.

Now that there are legions of Jeremy-come-latelies queuing outside Highbury and pontificating on every aspect of the game, it's easy to forget how lowly football was deemed to be in the Eighties. Fans were

frogmarched and strip-searched, vilified and demonised. We were England's cultural untouchables, sneeringly described by Martin Amis as "having the breath and complexion of a packet of cheese and onion crisps". Now, in the sanitised Nineties, Amis is a born-again football fanatic.

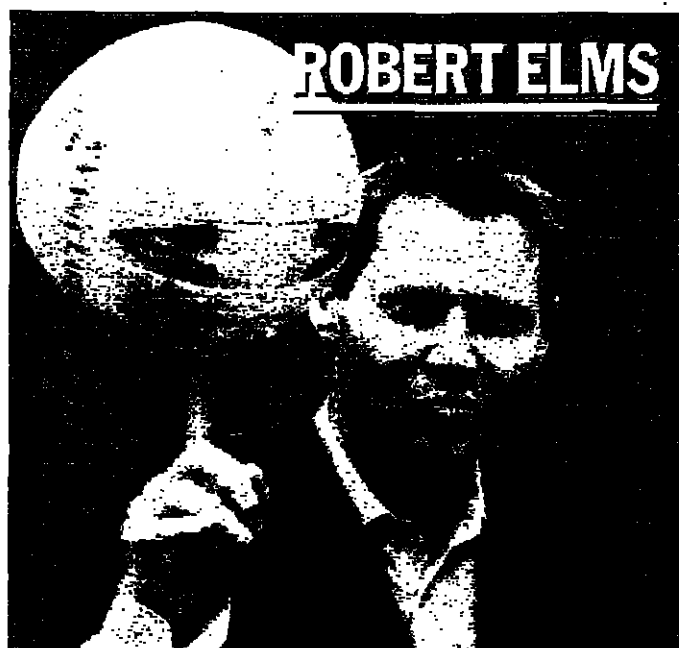
You had really to love the game to go in the 1980s, but then you could go in the 1990s.

'Legions of Jeremy-come-latelies pontificate outside Highbury'

rigorously policed ends, had largely sublimated their aggression into a magnificently bizarre and thoroughly British fashion phenomena, which would have kept armies of semidolmen in government grants. Except no self-respecting academics or sensitive arty

tin Amis as "having the breath and complexion of a packet of cheese and onion crisps". Now, in the sanitised Nineties, Amis is a born-again football fanatic.

You had really to love the game to go in the 1980s, but then you could go in the 1990s.



ROBERT ELMS

My prediction a few weeks ago that we would have to suffer an Arsenal v Tottenham Hotspur FA Cup Final is now looking a distinct possibility. And, as a result, we are witnessing a phenomenon that I can only call Final-phobia. Shaky Spurs fans, who have witnessed the impressive form of their neighbours with more than a little dread, are scared witless of the possibility of handing Arsenal the double. One of them said to me: "I would rather go out in the semi-final than face the ignominy of losing to the Gooners in the big one at Wembley."

The people who play and profit from the sport may love sold-out grounds, but it's a bitch for fans, who get ripped off and locked out.

Entry then was still cheap and you could pretty much pick any match and turn up on the day. I regularly went to Arsenal v Spurs derbies, despite caring little for either lot. The atmosphere was always thrillingly belligerent but essentially safe, the singing joyous if virulent and the stylistic statements fascinating.

Football in the 1980s had its back to the crumbling, graffiti-covered wall; it was embattled, embittered but immaculately turned out. All in all it was a bit like being at war. And as in so many conflicts, the survivors remember it as the time of our lives. Especially because Chelsea were spectacularly useless for the entire time.

Laughter for charity

Comic Relief: Red Nose Day 1999
BBC1, 7pm

The annual knees-up goes on until late, live as always, so often subject to changes. But you can count on the usual suspects to bounce the fund-raising along. Hosts include Lenny Henry, Denise Van Outen, Zoe Ball, French & Saunders, Julian Clary, Jack Dee and Jonathan Ross. "Alan Partridge" takes over from 9pm to 9.30pm on BBC2 and then it's back to Lenny. Thanks to Channel 4 we've also got Chris Evans for a special 777 Comic Relief. And repeaters appear in the oldest places — Johnny Depp, Woody Allen, Matt Damon, Whitney Houston, David Bowie, Elton John. To jaunt you back to sobriety there will be, as usual, plenty of those sometimes hard-to-watch film inserts about Third World poverty and how Comic Relief projects are tackling it.

Return to the Lost Gardens of Heligan
Channel 4, 8pm

And so we say farewell... to the memorable Cornish gardens and the double series about restoring them to their former glory. More than 300 years old and cared for through the early years by the Tremayne family "in the big house", the 150-acre estate is virtually perfect again. The Sun Dial Garden looks exquisite and John Nelson and Tim Smit are in their boat to further explore "the Lost Valley". Reminiscent of Monet this, with its luminous water paths and arched bridge into nowhere. As there isn't anyone in the big house now to finance the gardens, it is essential that visitors supply the funding and last year's dripping summer didn't help.

Trist Me, I'm a Doctor
BBC2, 8pm (except Northern Ireland)

Dr Hammond opens his show gulping a hamburger and confesses that he likes junk food. No wonder one wants to the man. But he then goes on to explain how stuffing it down contributes to, er, gas. "The average adult produces a litre of gas a day." There are myriad "good" bacteria in the



Gerri Halliwell sees how Comic Relief helps people around the world (BBC1)

intestines which break down our food and help to cause the wind — but the bacteria themselves can be humoured as you'll see. Also brace yourself for an elderly patient who gets her severely ulcerated leg treated with maggots. These creatures went out of fashion when antibiotics came in, but now that so many superbugs are defying this medicine the maggots are back and being purpose-bred.

Boyz Unlimited
Channel 4, 9.30pm

This pacey, funny series — really a thinly disguised satire on the pop record industry — is ending tonight without the attention it has deserved. Of course it's no *Spinal Tap* but over the weeks the far from fab four and their various hangers-on have developed into fully rounded characters. Now they're in the charts at No 11 (rival band Boyz Unlimited are at the top) and the writer-producer Richard O'Shea's docu-soap approach watches how they cope with such ignominy. (Nicky puts his trust in Jesus.) Luckily for them all, a tame Bosnian terrorist blows up their rivals' bus. The wrong bus — the bomb was meant for Boyz Unlimited — but at least now the field is clear to rise and rise again. Elizabeth Copley

RADIO CHOICE

Friday Play: Fisher of Men
Radio 4, 9pm

This is a terrific piece of work by David Constantine, a voice play in verse and prose. The fisher is the Rev Stephen Ross Hughes and the story tells of the events that led up to his early death. The voices are those of Hughes (Joan Meredith) and his parishioners, a dwindling band in a poor, isolated Welsh community. Most have gone over to the Methodists ("the fishers were backsliding to the old gods since the new one wasn't working"). Hughes asks God for help: "Send us a wreck or a million fish". The wreck truly arrives in the form of the *Royal Charter*, which was cast on to the North Wales rocks by the storms of 1859. The consequences are to be far-reaching and fatal.

Jazz Century
Radio 3, 11.30pm

This mammoth series on the history of jazz is proving a constant delight and tonight Russell Davies performs a considerable service for anyone who still thinks that Louis Armstrong was a soppy sort of fellow whose main claim to fame was singing *What A Wonderful World*. In reality of course Satchmo was a consummate trumpet player and tonight's programme concentrates on his recordings with the Hot Five in Chicago during the mid-1920s, shortly after he returned to the city following a stint with Fletcher Henderson's big band. These records were to be the making of Armstrong as a brilliant soloist and they provided the solid foundation for his long career fronting jazz ensembles of every size. Peter Barnard

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Zoo Ball 12.00 Jo Whitey 2.00pm Mark Radcliffe 4.00 Dave Pearce 6.00 Pete Tong 9.00 The Longest Radio Show in the World — Ewan 11.00 Westwood: Radio 1 Rap Show 2.00am Radio and Groovesetter 4.00 Emma B

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.30 Ken Bruce 12.00 Jimmy Young 2.00pm Ed Stewart 5.05 Des Lynam 7.00 Money at the Musicale (8.45) 7.30 Friday Night is Back Night From the Ganga Theatre, Northampton 8.15 Single and Simple: John in Care (3.15) 9.30 Listen to the Band 10.00 David Jacobs 10.30 Sheridan 11.45 The People's Pals 12.00 Lynn Parsons 4.00am Late Sharna

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports 8.00 Breakfast 8.00 Nicky Campbell 12.00 The Midday News with Alan Robb 1.00pm Ruzics and Co 4.00 Drive with Peter Allen and Jane Garvey 7.00 News Eds 7.30 Alan Green's Sportnight: Studio guests discuss the week's sporting issues. Followed by live second-half commentary on Bristol Rovers v Fulham 10.00 Late Night Live 1.00am Up All Night

TALK RADIO

6.00am The Big Boys Breakfast 9.00 Scott Chisholm & Sally James 12.00 Morning 1.00 Anna Reardon 3.00 ON to Ask 3.00 The Sports Zone 8.00 Nicky Ham's Access to All 10.00 Dave Barnett 1.00am Mike Dickinson

VIRGIN

6.30am Chris Evans 9.30 Russ Williams 1.00pm Nick Abbot 4.00 Hamnet Scott 7.00 Wheels of Steel 11.00 Janey Lee Grace 2.00am Steve Power

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air Petroc Trelawny announces the winner of a new competition in Prague for young composers.
9.00 Masterworks with Peter Hobday. Geminiani, after Corelli (Concerto grosso in D minor (La folle); Brahms (Prelude and Fugue in G minor); Stravinsky (Les noces); Tchaikovsky (Symphony No 7 in A); Vaughan Williams (Symphony No 7 in A).
10.30 Artist of the Week: Chung-ling Wang Chung.
11.00 Sound Stories: Indian Summer. Donald Macdonald remembers the later years of Ralph Vaughan Williams.
12.00 Composer of the Week: Delius.
1.00pm The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert: Paul Barritt, violin; Catherine Edwards, piano. Elgar (Violin Sonata in E minor, Op 82); Walton (Toccata); Albert Sammons (Scherzo, Op 3; News of Ireland, Op 10; Dance caprice, Op 15; Petite chanson) (i).
2.00 The BBC Orchestral Uster Orchestra under Niklas Willen, Håkan Järntröm and Kenneth Montgomerie. Music includes Puccini (Prelude Sinfonico); Respighi (Suite: The Birds); Menotti (Violin Concerto); Sibelius (Serenade).
4.00 Music Revisited: Lucie (Sleeping introduces a Spanish edition featuring songs and guitar music by Fernando Sor and Donisio Aguado (i).
4.45 Music Machine: Verity Sharp looks at small-scale instruments (i).

RADIO 4

5.30am World News 5.35 Shipping Forecast 5.40 Inshore Forecast 5.45 Prayer for the Day 5.47 Farming Today with Rachel Morgan 6.00 Today with John Humphrys and Sue MacGregor 6.30 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament Political news 9.00 Desert Island Discs The Australian conductor Charles Mackerras reflects on his career (i) 9.45 (PM) Serials: The Pleasures of the Table Anna Massey reads extracts from *Honey from a Weed* by Penelope Gray 9.48 (LW) An Act of Worship 10.00 Women's Hour with Jenni Murray 11.00 Sharika and Seagulls: A Summer With Sussex In the first of two programmes, David Stafford follows the efforts of the new regime at Sussex County Cricket Club to overturn more than a century of underachievement (1/2) (i) 11.30 Sunny Side Up The Gee Boys enter the last barbershop hop before the grand finale in Harrogate (5/6) 12.00 (LW) News Headlines: Shipping Forecast 12.00 (PM) News 12.00pm You and Yours Consumer stars and public service reports, presented by Liz Barclay and John Waite 1.00 The World at One with Nick Clarke 1.30 Puzzle Panel Chris Masterpiece presents riddles and brain-teasers 2.00 The Archers Yesterday's edition (i) 2.15 Afternoon Play: Family Affairs A woman finds it hard to accept her new love's children — and their mother: Paul Down and Lesley Nightingale star in *Family Affairs* (i) 3.00 Changing Places Howard Stobbsford explores the creative use of natural resources at Earth Balance, Northumberland, and in Sandford, Devon. Last in series 3.30 Shorelines Strangford Lough, Northern Ireland, headquarters of the UK's mud-rescue coastguard

CLASSIC FM

6.00am Nick Bailey's Easter Breakfast. Music to get the day off to a fast start. 8.00am Henry Kelly. The Hall of Fame. Hear and Classic Masterpiece 12.00 Lunchtime Requests. Jane Jones plays favourite music 2.00pm Concerto. Delius (Violin Concerto) 3.00 Jamie Crook. Continuous Classics, plus sport updates and local news 6.30pm Newsnight. Top stories and interviews with guests from the arts world 7.00pm Smooth Classics at Seven. John Brunning introduces classic sounds 8.00pm Evening Concert. Debbie Wiseman (Concerto for Orchestra); Richard Rodney Bennett (Pavane); David Matthews (Burnham Wood); Beethoven (Overture, Cello and Symphony No 6); Richard Strauss (Horn Concerto No 2) 11.00am at Night. Music through the small hours 2.00am Concerto. Delius (Violin Concerto) (i) 3.00am Mark Griffiths. The Early Breakfast Show

5.00 In Time Sean Rafferty is joined by Thomas Hampson to discuss famous Italian duets in the operatic repertoire for baritone and bass.
7.30 Performance on 3 Live from St David's Hall, Cardiff. BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Nicholas Kraemer, with Catherine Bott and Rachel Elliott, soprano; Robin Blaze, countertenor; Andrew Murgatroyd, tenor; Matthew Hargreaves, baritone. BBC National Chorus of Wales. Handel (Water Music: Suite No 2, Silete Venti); Concerto a due cori No 1 in B flat 8.25 Handel in the Strand, Vivid on the Phone. Mark Russell takes a quizzical look at the history of Baroque music 8.45 Concerto past two. Handel (Duet Dominus) 9.40 Postscript: Radio Poems — Martin by Peter Reading (5/5) 10.00 Here and Now Verity Sharp presents The Opening of the Mouth, a major new work by Richard Barrett for voices, instruments and electronics 11.30 Jazz Century (Sounding the Century) Presented by Noel Davies. See Choice (i) 12.00 Composer of the Week: Tchaikovsky (i) 1.00am Through the Night 1.00 Gluck (Pavane ed (Ballet); Roberta Alexander, soprano, Claron McFadden, soprano 3.15 Schubert (Overture in the Italian Style; Symphony No 9 in C) 4.20 Bach (Carols No 21) 5.05 Schumann (Fairy Tales, Op 132) 5.30 Giuseppe Verdi (Carmen (La pace) 5.35 C.P.E. Bach (Concerto in F for two harpsichords)

3.45 This Scripted Tale Part 50 of the history of Britain, narrated by Anna Massey (i) 4.00 Bookclub James Naughtie and guests talk to William Boyd about *Brazzaville Beach*, his award-winning novel (i) 4.30 The Message Alex Eadie and his guests discuss current media trends 5.00 PM with Nigel Wrench 6.00 Six O'Clock News 6.30 The Sunday Format John Morton's comedy about the stories generated by a fictional weekend newspaper, *Sunday Redneck Press*, Simon General and Tony Gardner. Last in series (4/4) 7.00 The Archers Ambrose celebrates Red Nose Day 7.15 Front Row Live arts programme 7.45 The Cry of the Bittern Environmental drama, by Tim Jackson. Broadcast earlier as part of Woman's Hour (20/30) (i) 8.00 Any Questions? Audience members from Teatime in Berkshire address panellists including John Redwood, Glensy Kinnock and Lord Jenkins. Chaired by Jonathan Dimbleby 8.45 Letter from America by Alister Cooke 9.00 The Friday Play: Fisher of Men David Constantine's tale. See Choice 10.00 The World Tonight Robin Lustig presents 10.45 Book at Bedtime: Ernest Hemingway's *Centenary* — The Sun Also Rises The final part of Hemingway's famous novel 11.00 Late Night on 4: Late Tackle Eleanor Oldroyd chains the sporting magazine 11.30 (LW) Today in Parliament Political update 11.30 (PM) Sport in the Movies Part one. Pat Butcher investigates the history of sport on film (1/2) 12.00 News 12.30am The Late Book: Golf Dreams The American novelist John Updike recalls his passion for golf. Last in series 12.48 Shipping Forecast 1.00am As World Service



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It is well known that Stephen Fry has a strong streak of yellow running through him — he is a life-long and still devoted Norwich City fan — but it comes as more of a surprise to learn that the heir apparent to the William crown, one of the most urbane brilliant minds in Great Britain, has become besotted by arguably the most lumpy sport of them all.

On Parkinson the other week, Fry admitted that he had been spellbound by the aesthetic and artistic merits of this year's Embassy world darts championship final, from the glittering arena of dreams that is the Lakeside Country Club in Frimley Green. Hearing him wax lyrical about the new

Dutch masters, Raymond Barneveld and Co Storppe (do they play total darts, I wonder?), the organisers, anxious to drag their sport upmarket, spotted a PR coup and invited Fry to the final next year.

So if you see a large, not particularly athletic-looking chap, glass and fag in hand, deep in concentration down Frimley Green way and he isn't one of the players, no, you haven't been drinking more than Cliff Lazarenko and it isn't Barry Fry. Providing, that is, that one hurdle can be overcome.

"I'm looking forward to it immensely," Fry said from his table at Le Caprice in Mayfair. "Except I'm not exactly sure where Frimley is."

BOWLS

Scotland have prize in sight

By DAVID RHYS JONES

SCOTLAND, who beat Wales on Wednesday, took two steps towards retaining the Hilton Trophy yesterday, first when they defeated Ireland by 45 shots in the home international series at Bournemouth yesterday morning, then when England, who were expected to be their closest challengers, were surprisingly beaten by a spirited Welsh side.

With five winning rinks out of six, the Scots suffered a surprising reverse on the rink skipped by Alex Marshall, who won the world indoor singles championship in January. Marshall's brother, Robert, was skipping on an adjacent rink and the contrasting fortunes of the two men was the talk of the stadium.

Alex Marshall, who was 15-10 ahead at 12 ends, lost 30-18 to a rink skipped by Noel Graham, of Belfast. Robert Marshall was level, 12-12, with the rink of Gary McDoy after 11 ends, but went on to win, 33-13.

Graham Robertson, who was 15-0 ahead after nine ends, and Graeme Archer, who scored 15 shots to five in the second half, returned winning cards of 26-12 and 27-12 respectively while Willie Wood and Jim Muir won by more modest margins.

The 26-9 victory by John Price over David Outler laid the foundations for the Wales win over England, but the form of Jeff Webber, who is skipping for his country for the first time this week, was a revelation.

Scottish hopes of winning the British team title for the eighth time in nine years are now high. Even if they were to lose to England today, the Scots are still likely to win the championship on shots count-back, having established a healthy advantage of 74 shots in earlier games.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 46

HEADAGE

(b) The number of animals, taken from head. "Abbey-Cwm-Hir Fox Destruction Society have decided to pay headage money on rabbits and carrion crows, as well as foxes, that are killed in the society's area."

MOUTAIN

(c) The tree peony, *Paeonia suffruticosa*, of the family Ranunculaceae, a large shrub bearing pale pink flowers, native to China and Tibet.

LAULAU

(b) A portion of a Hawaiian dish of meat and fish wrapped in leaves and steamed or baked. Also, this cover of leaves. Hawaiian, reduplicated form of *lau* a leaf.

INTERFERON

(a) A protein released by an animal cell, usually in response to a virus, which has the property of inhibiting further development of viruses of any kind in the animal. "The investigation of interferon, a chemical substance produced in men and animals and believed to act as the body's first line of defence against a wide range of virus infections, passed a critical stage in May 1962."

SOLUTION TO WINNING MOVE

Solution: 1 Bxg6! 6 Bx7+ Bc5 3 Qf6+ Bxf6 4 Bxf6 checkmate.

هكذا من الأمل

My space station is bigger than yours

When I was a lad, we made do with a few cap-guns and a few tin can rockets. But we were appy! Little kids nowadays, they're not content with a few tin can rockets, they've got a four-foot Super-Lasertron-Space-Soaker, which can floor an old-age pensioner at 50 yards. Or a \$96 billion International Space Station.

New Star in Orbit, last night's edition of *Horizon* (BBC2), was an awe-inspiring story. Never in the field of human toy collection has so much been paid by so many to so few. Well not so few, actually, the United States space station conceptualisation and hypothetical design industry supports a large, thriving community of boffins and research outfits at the American public's expense.

It was clear immediately that Ed Harriman and Lara Hannay, the producers, were a trifle sceptical

about the validity of this undertaking, and their documentary presented the case for the prosecution very effectively. I suppose, for the sake of balance, we ought to see a defence of the project, but I doubt it would be as convincing.

We have known since the dawn of the 'space race', apparently, that unmanned probes are vastly more effective research tools than manned expeditions and that they are a minute fraction as expensive. You can get a probe a billion miles past Saturn, sending back full colour snaps for the amount it costs to design a set of astronaut's space-pants.


During the Cold War, the problem was always keeping ahead of the Soviet Union. The United States discovered, like Nazi Germany before it, that the Russians had a knack of stealing a march on you, even with vastly inferior resources. An ingenious but simple solution will often do the

trick at half the time and cost of a super-sophisticated, high-tech one.

I was bad enough that they got the first man into space; they had to go and build the first space station, too. It was this, apparently, that got President Reagan going, and the boys from NASA were invited to present him with a series of models of space-ships. There were sceptics in the US Treasury from the outset, but once NASA got the toy-box out and Ronnie got to pick the models up, their cause was lost.

The original pitch was for America's bigger, better space station to cost \$8 billion and take ten years to complete. Agencies usually make 'low-ball' estimates, we were reminded, but this must take some kind of record. Fifteen years later the figure has been revised to \$96 billion over 21 years, and they have only just launched the first component into space. We are still six

REVIEW



Paul Hoggart

years short of target completion, so, according to my thumbnail calculation, the final cost could rise even further to about \$165,000 trillion, roughly. Even at today's estimate you could teach a lot of semi-literate Americans to spell for such sums. Or wipe out starvation in several developing countries.

The purpose of the project has also kept shifting with the political climate. During the Cold War it

was to be a cutting-edge research and development facility with commercial, medical and doubtless military spin-offs. Then it was to be a launchpad for an enormous, difficult and completely pointless manned flight to Mars.

Nowadays it's all about international peace and harmony, largely because the Americans discovered that the Russians were way ahead on recycling sweat and urine, and they needed to half-inch all that primitive but practical technology. The proposed station is now so big that it could eliminate the benefit of a low-gravity environment for medical experiments, and even those are dubious at best.

It will be the most expensive object in human history. "This thing just stands in the way," said a cynical scientist, bitter at the diversion of revenue from genuinely useful research. But nobody, just nobody, will have a bigger toy.

Wheeler Dealers (BBC2)

brought us down to earth with a bump. This quirky little programme has pitted two teams of salesmen against each other in a series of money-making challenges. The publicity describes them as would-be "Arthur Dales", after the dodgy entrepreneur in *Wander*. To emphasise this point the teams were given Reliance three-wheelers just like Del Boy Troner in *Only Fools and Horses*. Pardon?

Last week they had to organise a night at a club. Simon, a would-be City whiz-kid with a public school effect voice, who kept banging on about the need to be ruthless and amoral in business and ignoring all advice because it wasn't ruthless enough, made about 12p. He looked like a right merchant banker.

The teams did a bit better this week, mainly by selling pants. My nephew and his friends used to use the word "pants" as a term of derision.

The two teams had to flog stuff on market stalls. Well, pants went down really well at Walhamston and Kempson Park, perhaps because they were "genuine" Calvin Kleins at a fiver for a pack of three. The series at least taught us that successful hustling is hard work. Otherwise, I'm sorry to say, it was a pants.

So, sadly, are British heavy-weight boxers, when challenging for the world title. Lee Evans - *Kings of the Ring* (Channel 4) was a highly entertaining Cook's tour of these "game", "plucky", "spunky", bulldog-spirited chaps getting knocked flat by Americans, or remaining standing with their faces drenched in ketchup. Only Joe Bugner avoided these fates, bravely dancing backwards for 15 rounds. Lennox Lewis has a North American accent, so on Saturday who knows? But it's not the winning that counts, is it? It's how you wear those pants!

- ### BBC1
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (66366)
 - 7.00 Breakfast News (73015)
 - 9.00 Kilroy (1) (2651831)
 - 9.45 Wipeout (593336)
 - 10.10 The Vanessa Show (1) (7540270)
 - 10.55 News: Weather (1) (3100657)
 - 11.00 Change That (3110034)
 - 11.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (1) (3180893)
 - 11.55 News: Weather (1) (7068831)
 - 12.00 Call My Bluff (82134)
 - 12.30pm Top Tip Challenge (1) (4641589)
 - 12.55 The Weather Show (1) (5378558)
 - 1.00 One O'Clock News (1) (35102)
 - 1.30 Regional News: Weather (59807164)
 - 1.40 Neighbours: The truth about Bianca emerges (1) (3574752)
 - 2.05 Inevitable: A party host is the victim of a murder attempt. Starring Raymond Burr and Don Galloway (1) (5983637)
 - 2.55 Through the Keyhole (1) (3213742)
 - 3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays (6504164)
 - 3.45 Spider (1) (5167633) 3.50 Smart on the Road (9890676) 4.05 Red Nose Day 1999 (4199305)
 - 5.35 Neighbours (1) (1192770)
 - 6.00 Six O'Clock News: Weather (1) (947)
 - 6.30 Regional News Magazine (299)
 - 7.00 **Comic Relief** The fun starts here. Lenny Henry and Denise Van Outen kick off a mammoth seven hours of fundraising (1) (707725)

- ### BBC2
- 7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Play (75789) 7.05 Teletubbies (283312) 7.30 Snorks (8431725) 7.50 Short Change (593096) 8.15 Rived (398367) 8.20 Taz-Mania (5137365) 8.40 Polka Dot Shorts (1185034) 8.50 Piggy (1181218) 9.00 Storyline (703034) 9.10 See You (445309) 9.30 Numberline (8824015) 9.45 Come Out (8812270) 10.00 Teletubbies (56725) 10.30 Megamaths (1673454) 10.50 Look & Read (1683218) 11.10 Landmark (5989825) 11.30 English File (4522) 12.00 Soccer (82116) 12.30pm Working Lunch (36270) 1.00 Johnson and Friends (68004164)
 - 1.10 War Walks: The British attack on Normandy (1) (14835680)
 - 1.40 Hart-Davis on History (5678015)
 - 2.10 Awash with Colour (56528184)
 - 2.40 News: Weather (1) (3372454)
 - 2.45 Match of the Day (1) (4759928)
 - 3.25 News: Weather (1) (4692980)
 - 3.50 The Village (1) (5649812)
 - 4.25 Royal Advice show (5857831)
 - 4.25 Ready, Steady, Cook! (1) (8243676)
 - 4.55 Eater (1) (5228657)
 - 5.30 Today's the Day (1) (878)
 - 6.00 The Simpsons (1) (275034)
 - 6.25 Robot Wars: Grudge Match Special. Craig Charles presents (1) (250725)
 - 6.55 Top of the Pops: Gail Porter introduces Boyzone, Cher, Vengaboys, Skunk Anansie, Stereophonics, Whitney Houston, and Blur (1) (342454)
 - 7.30 Country House: The Tavisbros' plan for a new golf course on the estate causes tension with the villagers (1) (725)
 - 8.00 **Trust Me, I'm a Doctor** Dr Phil Hammond takes a closer look at the bowel (1) (5386)
 - 8.30 Gardeners' World: Stephen Leacy meets the Hollywood garden designer Jay Griffith (1) (5883)
 - 9.00 Alan Partridge Live: As BBC1 breaks for the news, the hapless broadcaster takes over (1) (391)
 - 9.25 Welcome to Las Vegas (1) (852251)
 - 9.30 Timeshift: Investigation into the Roman campaign in Dacia (1) (748218)
 - 10.20 Several Careful Owners: The Messerschmitt bubble car (1) (817763)
 - 10.30 Newswatch (1) (48098)
 - 11.15 Births, Marriages and Deaths: Terry finds consolation (3/4) (1) (479201)

- ### ITV
- 5.30am ITV Morning News (16638)
 - 6.00 GMTV (522589)
 - 9.25 Trisha (1) (8054218)
 - 10.30 This Morning (1) (44669812)
 - 12.15pm ITV News (1) (4157454)
 - 12.30 ITV Lunchtime News (1) (4366557)
 - 12.54pm Crimewatch (53771386)
 - 12.55 Goodway (1) (9063367)
 - 1.30 Home and Away: Geraldine steals the show (1) (3577634)
 - 1.55 The Jerry Springer Show (1) (585198)
 - 2.40 Wheel of Fortune (1) (7813705)
 - 3.10 ITV News Headlines (1) (4891251)
 - 3.15 ITV News (1) (4890252)
 - 3.20 CTV: Mopett's Shop (4810105) 3.30 Timbuctoo (1) (565676) 3.35 Animal Stories (9870299) 3.45 Giggle Bizz (9883763) 4.00 Pump It Up (8342947) 4.35 Comin' Alcha (1) (105763)
 - 5.00 Home and Away: Geraldine steals the show (1) (4028)
 - 5.30 Sportsworld: Sport highlights (1) (102)
 - 5.55 ITV Weather (980454)
 - 6.00 ITV News (1) (265)
 - 6.30 ITV Evening News: Weather (1) (367)
 - 7.00 Bruce Forsyth's Play Your Cards: Right Game show (8/16) (1) (4164)

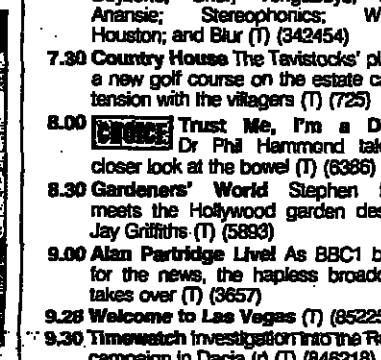
- ### CENTRAL
- As HTV West except 12.20pm-12.30 Central News: Weather (1) (735522) 12.55 Home and Away (1) (4044678) 1.25 The Jerry Springer Show (1) (262270) 2.10-2.40 Wish You Were Here? (1) (56555218) 3.15-3.20 Central News (1) (4890522) 3.30 Surprise Gardeners (1) (102) 6.00-6.30 Central News at Six: Weather (1) (255) 11.20-11.30 Central News: Weather (1) (75125) 11.30 Late Tackle (8/11) (541541) 12.35pm FILM: The Lookalike (1) (387077) 2.15 Club@vision (2036752) 3.00 Box Office America (1) (1205110) 3.25 The Haunted House (1) (12215597) 3.55 Central Jobbiter '99 (1) (5577313) 5.20-5.30 Asian Eye (342705)
 - As HTV West except 12.15pm-12.27 Westcountry News: Weather (1) (4157454) 12.55-1.30 Small Talk: Big Talk (703541) 12.55-1.25 Westcountry Lunchtime Live (1) (404678) 1.25 The Jerry Springer Show (1) (262270) 2.10-2.40 Home and Away (1) (56555218) 3.15-3.20 Central News: Weather (1) (4890522) 4.58-5.00 Birthday People (7006473) 5.30 Westcountry Weekend (1) (255) 6.00-6.30 Westcountry Live: Weather (1) (255) 11.20-11.30 Westcountry News: Weather (1) (751251) 11.30-11.30 FILM: Str. Crazy (30218)

- ### CHANNEL 4
- 5.55am Sesame Street (4389386)
 - 7.00 The Big Breakfast (25725)
 - 9.00 Schools: Off Limits (6920619) 9.25 Schools at Work (530229) 9.30 Europa (8819163) 9.45 Sport, Look, Listen (8814634) 10.00 The Complete Cosmos (5135454) 10.10 TVM (9012928) 10.25 1750 and After (9024783) 10.45 Enter the Maths Zone (934367) 11.00 The Technology Programme (3228066) 11.15 Stage One (8241947)
 - 11.30 Powerhouse (1) (9218)
 - 12.00 Sesame Street (1) (96164)
 - 12.30pm Bewitched (1) (38638)
 - 1.00 Pet Rescue (1) (28812)
 - 1.30 Australia Wild (1) (3911678)
 - 2.05 Edge of Eternity (1959) A sheriff links three unsolved murders to an argument over the ownership of a disused gold mine. Thriller, starring Cornel Wilde. Directed by Don Siegel (1) (6563366)
 - 3.30 Collectors' Lot (1) (473)
 - 4.00 Fifteen-to-One (1) (980)
 - 4.30 Countdown (1) (3105034)
 - 4.55 Ricki Lake (1) (5213725)
 - 5.30 Pet Rescue (1) (744)
 - 6.00 TFI Friday: Guests Andy Williams and James Nesbitt join Chris Evans and music comes from Echo and the Bunnymen and Travis (1) (48657)
 - 7.00 Channel 4 News (1) (354299)
 - 7.55 The Outlaw Train is running out for Michael (1) (28163)
 - 8.00 **CHOICE** Return to the Lost Gardens: The future of Heligan (1) (1454)
 - 8.30 Brookside: Ryan loses his cool, while Mother's Day brings cold comfort for Niamh and Jackie (1) (7779)
 - 9.00 Friends: Phoebe's identical twin pays a visit, leading to multiple mishaps and misunderstandings (1) (8725)

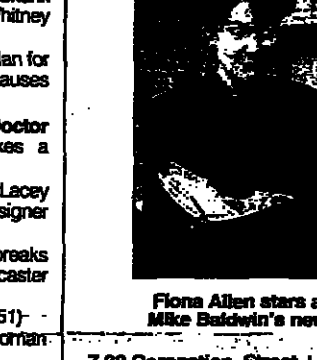
- ### CHANNEL 5
- 6.00am 5 News and Sport (5830294)
 - 7.00 WideWorld: Part 16: Continuing education in the workplace (1) (7006947)
 - 7.30 Milkshake! (2511473)
 - 7.55 Wimpole's House (1) (4590102)
 - 8.00 Harekazzoo (1) (2713725)
 - 8.30 Dappledawn Farm (1) (2712056)
 - 9.00 Nancy Lane (1) (1) (5517003)
 - 9.25 Russell Gurnall's Postcards (4372744)
 - 9.30 The Oprah Winfrey Show (5887283)
 - 10.20 Sunset Beach: Gregory reveals his secret to Annie (1) (3563386)
 - 11.10 Lezza (1) (7061675)
 - 12.05 News at Noon (1) (2716812)
 - 12.30pm Fantasy: Heaven has a nasty shock (1) (7) 5 News Update (1194034)
 - 1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful: A fashion critic praises Sally's show (1) (8055218)
 - 1.30 The Roseanne Show: Entertainment and chat with the outspoken comedian, 5 News Update (1193305)
 - 2.00 100 Per Cent Gold (9072034)
 - 2.30 Good Afternoon (1670522)
 - 3.30 Bridemaid (TVM 1989) Drama chronicling the laughter and tears of four friends taking part in a wedding. The first time in 20 years. Shelley Hack and Sele Ward star. Lisa Garrett directs (4812473)
 - 5.10 Sunset Beach (1) (1) (8314251)
 - 6.00 100 Per Cent Out (1) (2318015)
 - 6.30 Family Affairs: Pete gets his comeuppance (1) (2307367)
 - 7.00 5 News: Weather Round-up of the day's stories (1) (9045522)
 - 7.30 Natural Passions: The work of the wildlife artist David Coombe, who is responsible for transferring rhinos, kudus and lions to reserves throughout Africa (1) 5 News Update (2396251)
 - 8.00 Cops in the Sky: How helicopters enable the aerial police to catch more than 100,000 criminals every year; 5 News Update (840751)
 - 9.00 **Heaven in New Hampshire** (1991) True-life story of a drama about a high-school teacher who grows bored with his marriage and manipulates a low-struck student into killing her husband. Starring Helen Hunt, Chad Allen, Ken Howard, and Howard Hesseman. Directed by Joyce Chopra (1) 5 News Update (8117588)
 - 10.50 **Pollagregat: The Legacy** Nick picks up a mysterious hitch-hiker (1) (4190541)
 - 11.45 Delta of Venus (1994) An erotic novelist meets an American author who helps her fantasy tales come true. Adult drama, starring Amy Landrum. Directed by Zelnick (1) (5020599)
 - 1.40am **Near Miss** (1990) Premiere. Fast-paced farce, with Judge Reinhold as a bigamous executive working on a top-secret Pentagon project. Co-starring George Segal. Directed by Baz Taylor (42767)
 - 3.20 **I'm Alive** (1975) Fact-based adventure chronicling two plane crash survivors' efforts to stay alive in the frozen Yukon wilderness. Directed by Lawrence Schiller (5201877)
 - 4.35 Russell Gurnall's Postcards: A visit to Wimbledon (1) (38711400)
 - 4.40 Prisoner: Cell Block H (7007874)
 - 5.30 100 Per Cent (1) (8804541)



Zoe Ball co-hosts the fundraising festival (7.45pm)



Fiona Allen stars as Julie Stone, Mike Baldwin's new rep (7.30pm)



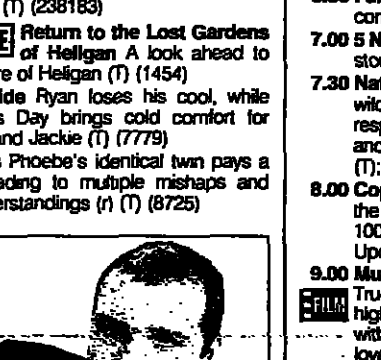
Coronation Street: Leanne gets proof that she's pregnant (1) (251)



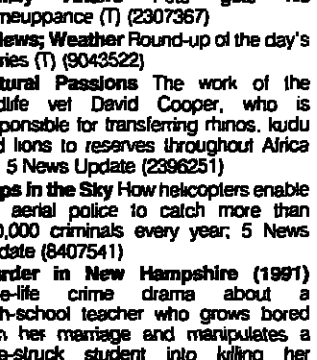
Carol Vorderman's Better Homes series, with Carol and her team making DIY dreams come true for neighbours in Newbury, converting a loft and installing a self-contained flat (10/10) (1) (3812)



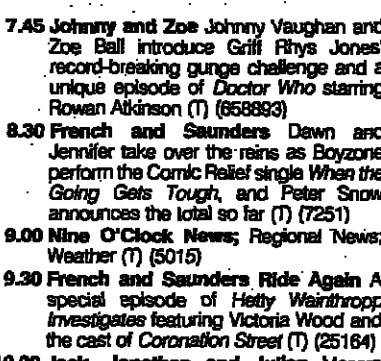
Angela Air Watch: 12.20-12.30



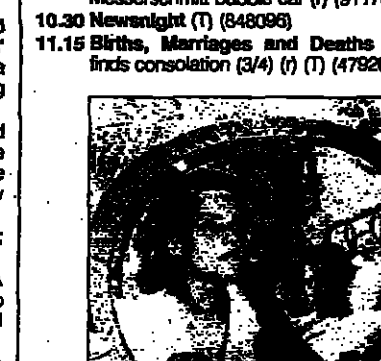
Frank Harper stars as the band's manager Nigel Gacey (9.30pm)



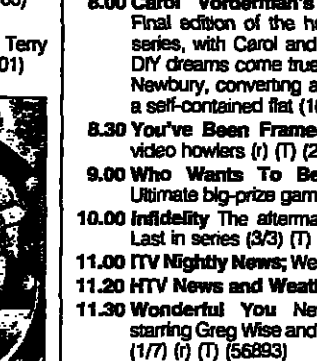
Boyz Unlimited: From bad to worse for the band as Nicky seeks solace in the Bible, while Gareth turns to Elton John (1) (41102)



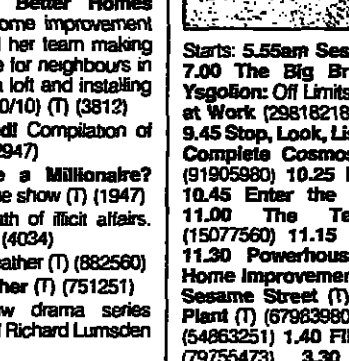
Jeanne Moreau stars in Francois Truffaut's classic drama (12.10am)



Francois Truffaut's romantic drama following the lives of an Austrian and a Frenchman who both fall for the same girl (12.10am)



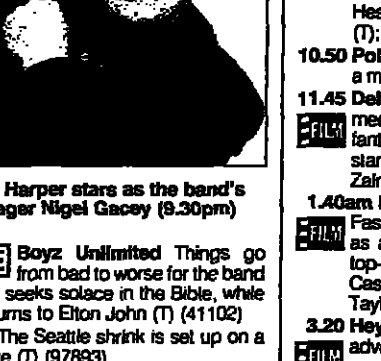
Holland includes music by Simple Red and Smashing Pumpkins (1) (211619)



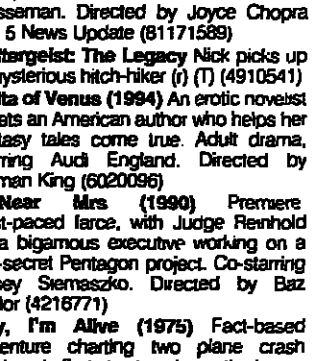
GCE Bitesize Revision: Spanish (16584) 5.00 Close



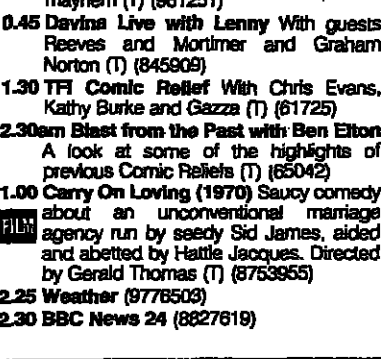
The Face of Fu Manchu (3177503) 5.25 Divided



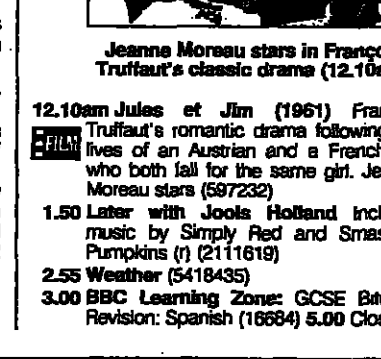
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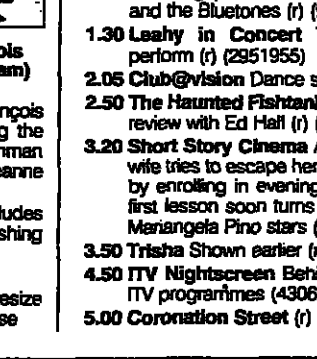
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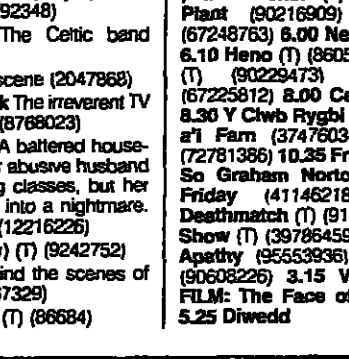
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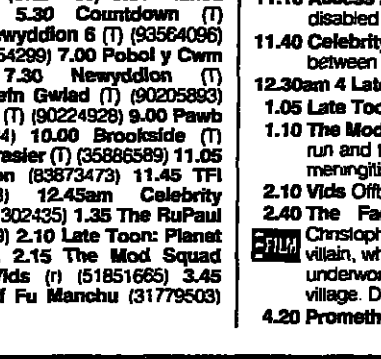
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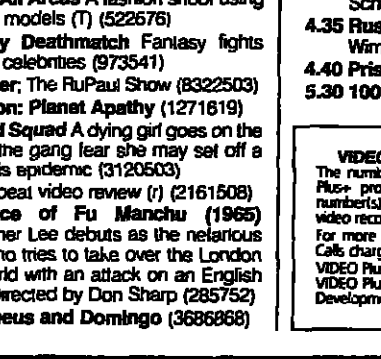
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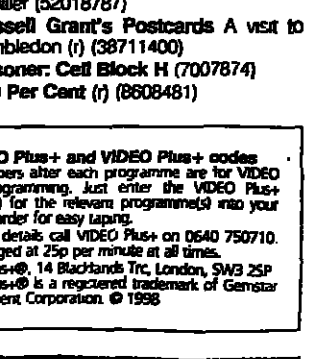
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The Face of Fu Manchu (3177503) 5.25 Divided



The Face of Fu Manchu (3177503) 5.25 Divided



The Face of Fu Manchu (3177503) 5.25 Divided

- ### For further listings see Saturday's Vision
- #### SKY ONE
- 7.00am Court Dockets (78311) 7.30 The Chris Dave Breakfast Show (91029) 8.30 Hollywood Squares (59229) 9.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (51725) 10.00 Oprah Winfrey (98229) 11.00 Gull (72529) 12.00 Larry Jones (98163) 1.00pm Mid About You (7710) 1.30pm Jeopardy (82929) 2.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (51725) 3.00 Jeopardy (82929) 4.00 Gull (72529) 5.00 Star Trek: Voyager (9557) 6.00 America's Funniest Home Videos (42929) 7.00 The Simpsons (1092) 7.30 The Simpsons (1092) 8.00 Best of the Cruser (81309) 8.30 Ready Caught in the Act (21380) 10.00 Court Dockets (78311) 11.30 Star Trek: Voyager (9557) 12.00pm The Court (4042) 1.30pm Lay (540299)

- #### SKY CINEMA
- 4.00pm Dark Privates (1941) (719015) 6.00 The Desperate Hours (1955) (259184) 8.00 Hollywood Squares (59229) 9.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (51725) 10.00 Oprah Winfrey (98229) 11.00 Gull (72529) 12.00 Larry Jones (98163) 1.00pm Mid About You (7710) 1.30pm Jeopardy (82929) 2.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (51725) 3.00 Jeopardy (82929) 4.00 Gull (72529) 5.00 Star Trek: Voyager (9557) 6.00 America's Funniest Home Videos (42929) 7.00 The Simpsons (1092) 7.30 The Simpsons (1092) 8.00 Best of the Cruser (81309) 8.30 Ready Caught in the Act (21380) 10.00 Court Dockets (78311) 11.30 Star Trek: Voyager (9557) 12.00pm The Court (4042) 1.30pm Lay (540299)

- #### FILMFOUR
- 8.00am Short Attention Span (4121638) 8.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 10.10 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 12.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 1.30pm Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 2.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 3.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 4.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 5.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 6.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 7.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 8.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 9.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 10.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 11.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 12.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 1.30pm Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 2.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 3.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 4.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 5.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 6.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 7.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 8.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 9.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 10.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 11.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 12.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 1.30pm Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 2.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 3.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 4.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 5.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 6.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 7.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 8.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 9.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 10.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 11.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 12.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 1.30pm Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 2.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 3.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 4.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 5.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 6.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 7.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 8.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 9.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 10.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 11.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 12.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 1.30pm Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 2.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 3.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 4.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 5.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 6.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 7.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 8.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 9.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 10.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 11.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 12.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 1.30pm Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 2.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 3.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 4.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 5.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 6.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 7.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 8.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 9.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 10.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 11.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 12.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 1.30pm Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 2.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 3.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 4.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 5.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 6.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 7.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 8.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 9.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 10.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 11.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 12.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 1.30pm Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 2.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 3.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 4.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 5.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 6.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 7.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 8.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 9.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 10.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 11.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 12.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 1.30pm Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 2.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 3.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 4.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 5.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 6.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 7.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 8.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 9.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 10.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 11.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 12.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 1.30pm Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 2.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 3.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 4.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 5.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 6.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 7.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 8.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 9.00 Cabaret (1972) (1300259) 10.00 Cab



RUGBY LEAGUE 45

Stains plans to leave mark on Broncos

SPORT

FRIDAY MARCH 12 1999

ROBERT ELMS 50

In praise of the maligned Eighties



Premier League duo forced to resign

By Matt Dickinson

THE leaders of English football continued to fall like ninepins last night as Peter Leaver, the chief executive of the Premier League, and Sir John Quinton, its chairman, were forced to resign. Coming so soon after the recent scandal at the Football Association, the hierarchy of the national game now consists entirely of caretakers.

Echoes of the FA's cash-for-votes crisis resounded through the Premier League controversy as Leaver and Quinton, like former FA counterparts Graham Kelly and Keith Wiseman before them, were found guilty of exceeding their powers. As at Lancaster Gate less than three months ago, there were also undercurrents of political score-settling. Leaver had been increasingly unpopular among the FA Carling Premiership chairman because of his austere style. It was entirely in character that

given the chance to plead for his position, he is believed to have stood his ground.

Leaver and Quinton were deemed to have abused their positions by giving lucrative contracts to Sam Chisholm and David Chance, both former BSkyB executives, without the full consultation of the chairman of the 20 Premier League clubs.

Several reacted furiously when they heard the huge sums that Chisholm and Chance could make, including up to £13 million between them if they successfully renegotiated television rights when they expire in 2001.

A four-man sub-committee comprising David Dein, vice-chairman of Arsenal, Rick Parry, chief executive of Liverpool, Alan Sugar, chairman of Tottenham Hotspur, and Michael Jenson, a Coventry City director, was set up to try to renegotiate the contracts

OUT OF A JOB



Leaver, left, and Quinton were said to have exceeded their powers

with Chisholm and Chance. But by yesterday they had succeeded only in a meeting last week with Chance, who is understood to have insisted that his contract was legally binding.

Leaver's failure to bring all the parties to the negotiating table had led to a hardening of opinions by yesterday morn-



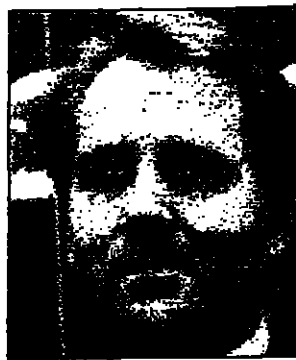
IN THE MONEY



Chisholm, left, and Chance negotiated highly lucrative contracts

ing and the outcome appeared inevitable long before the meeting came to a conclusion after 3½ hours. "Many of the chairman seemed to have already made their minds up," a source said. "It was obvious from the start that the mood had turned against Leaver."

The Premier League will now be in competition with the



FA to find a chief executive. Mike Foster, the secretary, will temporarily fill the breach, just as David Davies is doing at Lancaster Gate. Dave Richards, the chairman of Sheffield Wednesday, has been appointed as Quinton's replacement in the short term. A management committee to guide the Premier League

gaining of clubs for television contracts. Leaver had already given his evidence and the League is confident that its case will not be damaged.

The most pressing job, though, will be the resolution of the Chisholm and Chance contracts, with the chairman anxious that the negotiation of television rights should be brought back into their full remit and that the contracts offered by Leaver should be amended.

He promised Chisholm and Chance an initial fee of £600,000 with equal sums paid at the beginning of their second and third years, but it is the huge bonuses on offer that have provoked anger. A 5 per cent commission would be worth £13 million if, as the League hopes, the present BSkyB deal, worth £743 million over five years, is increased to more than £1 billion.

Chisholm and Chance were also promised 5 per cent of

pay-per-view revenue as well as 10 per cent of the equity in a Premier League television company, which could provide its own match coverage.

Manchester United and Newcastle United were the first clubs to raise objections and by yesterday Leaver, a Tottenham fan and commercial barrister, and Quinton, the former chairman of Barclays Bank, had lost all support. Neither would speak last night as their lawyers negotiated settlements.

The English game now finds itself with an acting FA chairman (Geoff Thompson), FA chief executive (Davies), and coach (Kevin Keegan), and now Richards and Foster at the Premier League. In Scotland, Jim Parry, chief executive of the SFA, was ousted from his post this week after an inquiry into the handling of the registration of Jorge Cadete, the Celtic striker.

Stone joins Villa, page 46

Henman puts case to be best of British

FROM ALIX RAMSAY IN INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA

THE Battle of Britain, as the locals termed it, is over and Tim Henman has emerged the winner. He advanced to the quarter-finals of the Championships Cup with a 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 victory over Greg Rusedski.

As a match, it was like the curate's egg, good in parts. At times, both played well, very well in some cases, but seldom at the same moment. Such is the way of things between two men who know each other's games inside out.

For all their protestations of having a friendly and jolly rivalry, Rusedski and Henman have always got one eye on the opposition. Neither

likes to be beaten at the best of times, but neither can stand to have the other get even the hint of an edge on him. For example, Henman signs a deal with Mercedes and drives a Jaguar and swans around in a gleaming new motor. All in all, such rivalry does not make for the best of tennis matches. Yesterday, there was definitely a note of tension in the air — on court, at least.

As the match began, the crowd was thin on the ground, but in these parts, two Limeys playing tennis does not count for much. "Henman's the Eng-

lish one, I think," a bemused and elderly voice in the crowd said. He was also the one in charge as the hostilities got under way.

Rusedski was looking edgy and could not find his range on his first service, having to go through the first hour without an ace to his name. An exchange of breaks at the start did little to settle the nerves, but while Henman also took his time to get his service working, he was looking sharper on the volley.

Admittedly, his forehand was its usual, erratic self. When it is working, it is a match-winner; when it is stuttering, it is a liability and in the first set there was just enough of the former to make the difference. There were never going to be more than a few points in it either way and Henman seemed to be collecting the ones that counted.

However, the second set was a different story. Facing defeat, Rusedski began to relax and go for his shots and, as he did so, the wind picked up. Suddenly, the conditions were totally different and Henman could not cope.

Rusedski started to head for the net with more frequency and more purpose and, left to fend from the back court, Henman made a couple of duff judgments. As the set whistled by, Rusedski broke the Henman service three times, so was none too concerned that his own was snatched just the once.

Standing toe-to-toe in the third set, Rusedski came off worse, literally. Henman had got the hang of the gusting



Henman cannot resist a glance towards Rusedski, his rival, during their tussle in Indian Wells yesterday. Photograph: Gary M. Prior/Allsport

wind, breaking Rusedski to move into a 4-3 lead, when Rusedski had to call for the trainer. A huge blister on his big toe needed treatment — not that it seemed to slow him down much once the medics had done their stuff. But by then it was all too late and Henman was heading for the quarter-finals.

Indeed, for him, the day was almost too good to be true. At first Henman and Rusedski's draw had looked to be a ticket to nowhere in particular. The figure of Pete Sampras loomed large in the quarter-finals — until, that was, he ran into Felix Mantilla. The Spaniard, who really ought not to be allowed near a barber's shop without a responsible adult to hold his hand — the hair col-

our was normal but the goatee beard was a little alarming — sat back and watched as Sampras stumbled and finally fell 7-6, 3-6, 6-3.

The world No1 looked decidedly ring-rusty after his long winter break and, with only five matches under his belt this year, he was struggling from the start — and he knew it.

"I couldn't get my game going and I struggled with everything," he said. "I don't like losing and playing the way I did tonight, but you can't just get your form back, like the way I was playing in Hanover last year. It's going to take some time, but I'm a pretty impatient guy and I like to win everything I play."

One thing he is still deter-

mined not to play is the United States Davis Cup tie in April. Whatever the rumours and whatever Rusedski has said, Birmingham does not fit into the great man's schedule.

"Maybe I'll get a message from God and He'll say 'play Davis Cup', but I haven't spoken to Him lately," Sampras said, revealing a rare shaft of wit. However, with only two of the seven Americans left in the draw — Todd Martin and Chris Woodruff — and three possible team members gone — Jan-Michael Gambill, Jim Courier and Justin Gimelstob — Tom Gulikson, the United States captain, is having as hard a job getting a full team together as his opposite number, David Lloyd.

WBC attacks choice of referee

FROM SRIKUMAR SEN IN NEW YORK

THE World Boxing Council (WBC) is unhappy with the appointment by the New York State Athletic Commission, of Arthur Mercante Jr as the referee in the bout between Lennox Lewis and Evander Holyfield for the world heavyweight championship here tomorrow.

The WBC had wanted Mercante's father, Arthur Mercante Sr, 78, who had refereed the first contest between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier at the Garden and has been in charge of 103 championship bouts in six decades of officiating in the ring.

Mercante Jr was the referee for the contest between Lewis and Ray Mercer at the Garden in 1996, but Jose Sulaiman, the WBC president, said: "We are very disappointed. We had told the New York commission that we wanted Arthur Mercante Sr but they ignored our wishes and appointed his son."

"They did not even tell us who they had appointed. The son is not as experienced as

his father, naturally, or as good. If it is age that is worrying the commission, I can only say that he had a very good fight only recently. This event at the Garden is a very important one and requires someone who has most experience of big fights."

The New York commission was not available for comment, but it is believed that Mercante Sr's age went against him. It is thought that

the commission feared that if anything went wrong in the contest, they could be blamed for making the incorrect appointment of referee.

Those who have seen Mercante Sr say that, even if he is two years off 80, he looks no more than a man in his late 60s. This is because of his position as deputy commissioner of the parks and recreation department at Hempstead, New York, where he is in charge of all fitness programmes.

Mercante Sr, who started out as the boxing co-ordinator of Gene Tunney in the US Navy in 1942, is still punching away, literally. He does several rounds on the heavy bag and speed-ball daily.

He said: "It was a great honour when they put up my name because I hope to be refereeing in the year 2000. But my son is just as good. They claim that he is the best young referee in the world."

"I was very critical of him when he told me he wanted

me to become a referee. I told him he could not become a referee because he was an amateur referee first for three to five years. So he did the Golden Gloves and the Empire State Games and, after three years, he was ready."

Mercante Jr has not refereed any contests involving Holyfield, but, because of the complaints by Mike Tyson about use of the head by Holyfield, the referee will be watching out for infringements by the International Boxing

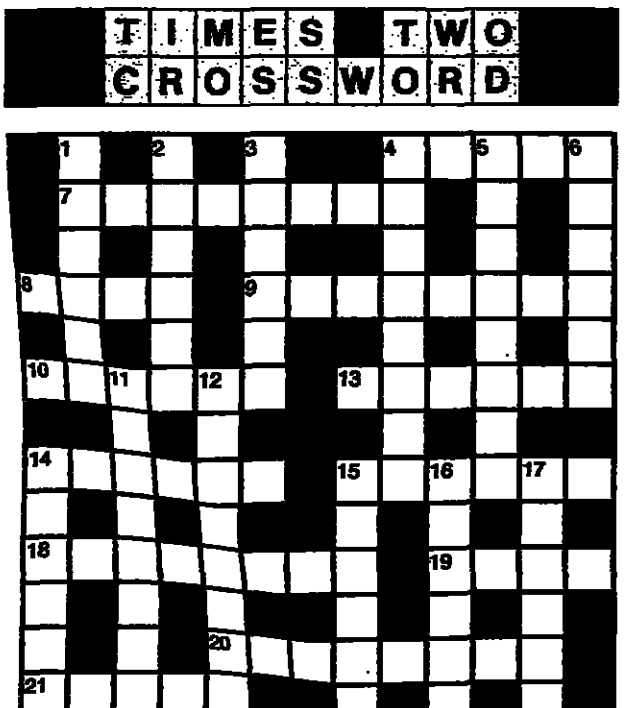
Ring of truth.....48
Lynne Truss.....48

Federation and World Boxing Association champion.

According to his father, Mercante Jr, who is 5ft 11in and heavily built, will tolerate no nonsense. "My one advice to him was to be in complete control at all times. And not to be aware of the camera or smile or wave at it as some refs do," Mercante Sr said.



Lewis controversy



No 1663

- ACROSS
4 Horseshoe river bend (5)
7 Rearranged piece of trickery (5-2,3)
8 Thomas —, *Death in Venice* author (4)
9 Mechanical tower-bells (8)
10 London insurance market (6)
13 Opportunity (6)
14 C15 Florence ruling family (6)
15 Friedrich —, Marx colleague (6)
18 Abandoned and decayed (8)
19 Protruberance (4)
20 Its course never did run smooth (MIND) (4,4)
21 Opponent (5)
- DOWN
1 Fall, lie, inelegantly (6)
2 Parsimonious (6)
3 Tiny spots: sounds like glasses (6)
4 Unconsciousness (8)
5 Accurate shot (5-3)
6 Soft neigh (6)
11 Stubbornly unshakable (8)
12 Meek obedience (8)
14 Confusion, mess (6)
15 Right of admission (in society) (6)
16 Historian: an ape (6)
17 Supple part of gun carriage (6)
- SOLUTION TO NO 1662
ACROSS: 1 Cube 3 Haricot 8 Crucial 9 Taxes 10 Lupin 11 Close in 13 Test match 17 Caribou 19 Route 20 Rabbi 22 Invited 23 Hexagon 24 Eden
DOWN: 1 Cackle 2 Blue Peter 3 Holy Communion 4 Ratio 5 Cox 6 Tisane 7 Friends 12 Exhausted 14 Throve 15 Search 16 Redden 18 Being 21 Box

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